◆ James Fallows on Old Money
◆ "My Favorite Poverty Program:" Ken Auletta, Nicholas Lemann, Charles Murray and others

The Washington Monthly

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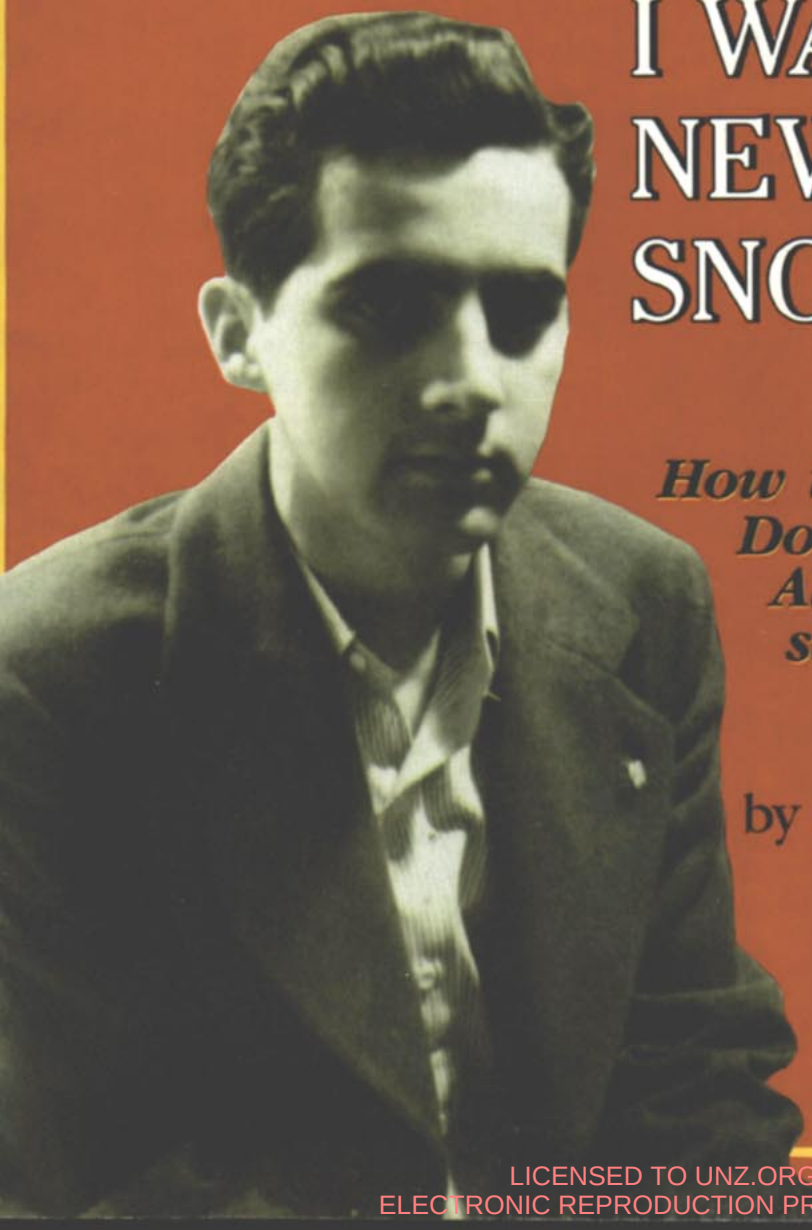

I WAS A NEW YORK SNOB

How the Dodgers, Don Quixote, and Allen Ginsberg saved me

by Charles Peters

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GUESS WHAT WAS HAPPENING WHILE MOST REPORTERS WERE WRITING ABOUT THE CONSTITUTION'S 200TH ANNIVERSARY?

Last year offered reporters plenty of big stories to sink their journalistic teeth into. Two of the most significant were the 200th anniversary of the Constitution and the revelation that the Justice Department was scheming to take over the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and other major unions.

While these stories were reported separately, few reporters had an opportunity to explore the connection between them. Our organization—Americans Against Government Control of Unions—thinks it's time for everyone to take a closer look.

The plan to take over these unions flies in the face of the Constitution and virtually every other legal document that guides this country. If unions are taken over on the basis of unproven allegations against a few leaders, what happens to due process? If duly elected union officials are removed, what happens to freedom of association? If the Justice Department puts officials who do not represent union members in charge of labor organizations, what happens to freedom of expression?

Think about it. If the Justice Department starts taking over independent organizations, such as labor unions, how is America different from those countries that have no Constitution to protect people's rights?

This isn't "just" a labor story. This takeover, if successful, will set one of the most far-reaching and dangerous legal precedents America has seen in decades.

If you would like to know more about the Justice Department's takeover scheme and its ramifications for all Americans, please contact:

Americans Against
Government Control
of Unions,
P.O. Box 33636,
Washington, D.C. 20033.
(202) 785-5106

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LETTERS

Nothing's permanent

In your April issue, you tilted toward the wrong windmill by denouncing the "computerized data bank" for wives of Foreign Service Officers. There are good reasons for criticizing the USG bureaucracy generally and the State Department specifically, but this particular observation was silly, poorly researched, and sexist.

I am a retired Foreign Service Officer, now accompanying my FSO wife on her foreign service assignments. I have provided the "data bank" information on my skills, background, and experience in the event I wish to work in a post where my wife is assigned. Why? At some posts, part-time employment for spouses may be useful to maintain sanity, while at the same time providing those posts needed skills not otherwise available.

Your implication that somehow Department of State Personnel would send a FS spouse to another post to work temporarily and that that position would become a full-time position does not reflect how Personnel functions. As you may know some countries do not grant permission for Americans to work in the private sector. As you may also know, increasing numbers of FS spouses with good jobs in the D.C. area are reluctant to give those jobs up to accompany their spouses overseas. The PIT jobs help relieve morale problems, while providing our missions with relatively inexpensive means to perform tasks that would have to be done somehow, some way.

JOHN C. STEPHENS
Lewiston, New York

The editor replies:

I applaud these temporary jobs if they are truly temporary and involve doing only things that really need to be done. But my experience in government is that temporary jobs tend to become permanent jobs and often endure long after the real need for them has passed.

Amnesty international

Jason DeParle's article, "Why Amnesty Failed" [April], is almost unequalled in its reporting of opinion as fact and in distorting the few facts reported in his attempt to justify an extension of the amnesty application period. I am convinced that there is no justification for such an extension, and that the costs associated with it are excessive.

The number of applicants for the legalization program to date is quite close to the number that Congress assumed would apply. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimated that 1.4 million persons would apply for the general legalization program, and that 250,000 would apply for the agricultural legalization program. To date, 1.2 million (and counting) have applied for the general legalization, and 400,000 (and counting) have applied for the agricultural legalization. Talk of a "shortfall" in the number of applicants relies on data which were not used by the Congress.

No one seems willing to recognize that an extension will likely result in less border enforcement, longer waits for naturalization, and increased delays in petitioning for legal immigrants, as funds are transferred to finance the extension.

Mr. DeParle claims that the INS has not properly distributed information concerning the legalization program to potential applicants, and that this deficiency alone warrants an extension. These claims are mistaken. The General Accounting Office (GAO), which has studied the implementation of the legalization, noted in congressional testimony that INS's efforts regarding all major aspects of the program have been quite satisfactory.

Mr. DeParle cites "fear of INS" as a major factor in discouraging applicants. Not true. Eighty percent of all applicants have filed directly with the INS instead of utilizing one of the many ethnic, community, or religious organizations that the law allowed to submit applications. If "fear" were such a problem, direct applications to INS would be much lower.

"Family unity" is an issue that even some of the immigrant advocates privately admit was overplayed. To date, no illegal family members have been deported.

"Money" might have been a factor if the application period had been only a few weeks long, but amnesty applicants had a full year to save the money needed to apply. In addition, the amount is much lower than the average fee an alien smuggler charges to take someone across the southern border ($300-$500/person).

Mr. DeParle claims that "processing" and "regulations" issued by INS have increased confusion about the legalization program. In fact, INS conducted a regulation-writing process of unprecedented openness in the spring of 1987, sending out "draft" regulations for public comment before moving to "proposed" and then "final" regulations.

The amnesty program has been a success. The Immigration Service should be complimented for a job well done, and we should not waste taxpayers' money on an extension that will bear little fruit.

ALAN K. SIMPSON
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Simpson is a senator from Wyoming and a member of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary.

Jason DeParle replies:

Senator Simpson rightly regards the amnesty program as an act of American generosity, and he is justifiably proud of the key role he played in creating it. That's why it's so disconcerting that he has closed his mind to the flaws in its implementation.

Senator Simpson belittles the reasons that many illegal immigrants failed to apply: fear of family members being deported, fear of the INS, lack of documentation, lack of money, confusion about the program. But the same GAO testimony he approvingly quotes concluded that these were "major factors precluding people from applying." Fear of having one's family members deported *is* an emotion that flows quite palpably through the hovels of Houston or San Antonio.

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As for numbers, he quotes a congressional estimate that 1.4 million would apply. The more pertinent figures come from the INS, the government's true immigration experts, which estimated a turnout of between 2 and 3.9 million (excluding agricultural workers). At final tally, about 1.6 million applied (excluding agricultural workers). Therein lies the shortfall.

But this is quibbling. A year ago, Senator Simpson played the role of a wise and generous statesman; these days he sounds like an accountant. The point is that an extension would have allowed us to fulfill more completely our original promise. We had little to lose. The illegal immigrants we left behind—mostly poor, confused, and afraid—had a world to gain.

Pigskin probabilities

In "Tilting at Windmills" for April, you cited a mortality study of National Football League players. The average age at death of a group who played in the 1920s was 77.4 years. The corresponding figures for groups who played in the thirties and forties are 64.2 and 58.3.

If you find these figures hard to believe, perhaps you will be surprised to learn that, of the generation born after World War II, nobody has yet survived to the age of 45 years.

STEPHEN THROOP
Grover, North Carolina

The editor replies:

In 1940, the average professional football player was probably around 25 years old, having spent four years in college and played in the NFL for a while. Today, if he is still alive, he is 73. The players' average age was surely higher in the late forties because so many of them had not only gone to college but had served in World War II as well. So the fact that the average age of death of a group of NFL players from the 1940s is 58 is not to be lightly dismissed.

Slam dink

About Jonathan Rowe's "The Greek Chorus" [April]: I couldn't understand the drastic need for the firing of "Jimmy the Greek" Snyder; but then I couldn't understand the drastic need for hiring him either. He was always a boor, and his credentials were always fishy in the extreme.

He was right about the fact that blacks of a certain heredity have a physical advantage in certain sports. I don't, however, think this is traceable to "breeding for size" during the slavery period. Certain Nailotics, for instance—the Nuer and the Dinka of the Sudan come to mind—have been breeding true for thousands of years without the help of slavery or indeed any other form of social engineering, and producing with great regularity a physical type—sparely built, long-muscled, extremely tall—perfectly suited to a game like basketball.

Now obviously a candidate for the NBA has to work hard and stay in shape like the next man, and it would

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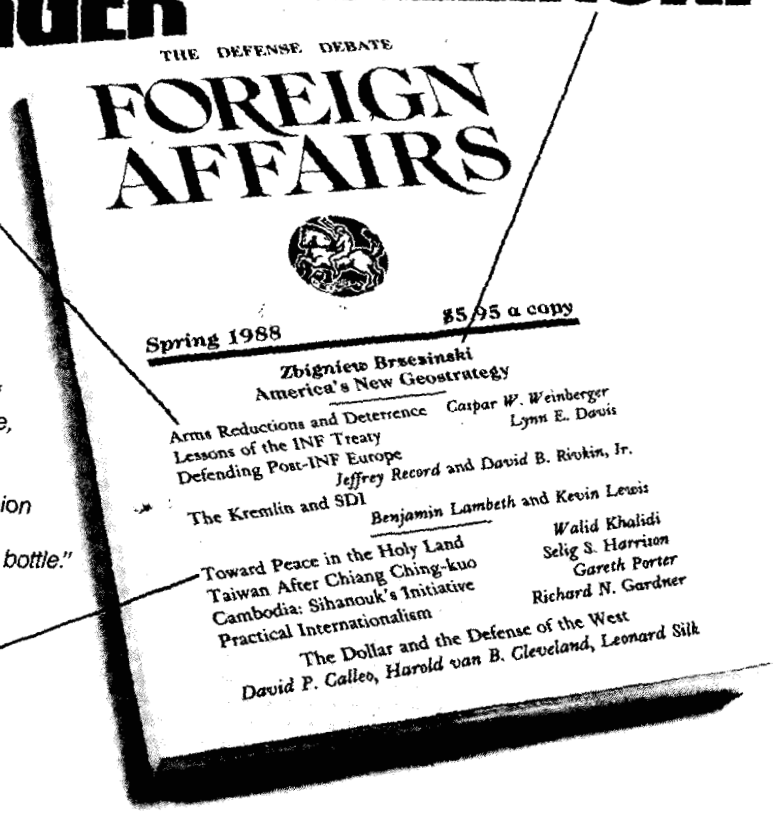
In the current issue of Foreign Affairs.

"Do I trust General Secretary Gorbachev? No. But in light of the realities of the Soviet regime, both the question and the answer are largely irrelevant ... If we ever allow ourselves to be dependent upon having to trust a general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union for our security, we will have already lost our security."

WEINBERGER

"The relative decline in American global economic preeminence occurred not in spite of America but because of America. It was the consequence of a deliberate and sustained American policy, pursued with strategic constancy over several decades."

BRZEZINSKI



"Important sectors of Israeli public opinion ... are aware of the dangers of indefinite domination of another people, but this is not the thrust of popular Israeli sentiment nor of the thinking of the Israeli leadership. The Israeli scorpion is determinedly uncognizant of the Palestinian fellow creature in the same bottle."

KHALIDI

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help if he had the intelligence, coordination and quick wits of the average NBA center. But it would be foolish to deny that a man whose genetic inheritance included Dinks, Tutsi or Nuer blood had a distinct advantage, where basketball was concerned, over the average Old World Frenchman.

For God's sake, don't ask me where Spud Webb gets *his* advantage from! Anybody that small who can jump that high is obviously an extraterrestrial.

GEORGE WARREN
Pacific Grove, California

Spat about Pat

James Fallows's thoughts on what makes Pat Buchanan tick ["The Conservative Mind: Patrick Buchanan," April] seemed right on target concerning what's wrong with "true" believers like Buchanan.

My only reservation would be with his comment that dogmatic politics "turn people into bullies." This is dog bites man news.

The political dialogue today will lead to political "gridlock" unless something scares us. My culprit in this is the antipolitical, prejudicial attitude exhibited by the so-called liberal. No matter how right the particular judicial decision may be, without political compromise the losers will eventually come back to haunt the winners. We are all Buchanans in one way—Charles Peters on school teachers for instance. Our entire constitutional system breeds this type of political attitude.

A constitutional convention is long overdue. The year 1989 would be a good year to admit that after 200 years our system is in need of change. A parliamentary system is my hobby horse. *TWM* needs to lead the discussion.

JIM MORGAN
Mt. Holly, New Jersey

Secret Agent Man

I am writing about Matthew Cooper's article ["Why Washington's Best Cops Walk Its Safest Beat," April] on the U.S. Secret Service Uniformed Division. I would like to address three points that he failed to grasp.

As our nation's capital, the District does contain a variety of federal police/security forces, including the Secret Service Uniformed Division. Each force has its own responsibility. "Are they all where they should be?" asks Mr. Cooper, referring to the federal police forces in Washington.

The Uniformed Division has one primary mission—protection. Formally created by Congress on July 1, 1922, it is mandated by law to protect the White House complex and other presidential offices, the president and immediate family members, the official residence of the vice president, the vice president and immediate family members, foreign diplomatic missions in the District's metropolitan area, and elsewhere as prescribed by statute.

In contrast, it is the formidable task of the Metropolitan Police Department to protect District citizens from street crime. To argue that the Uniformed Division should shift its focus not only ignores the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Police but the ever-present threat to public figures. To dilute the Secret Service's mission would seem analogous to "robbing Peter to pay Paul." In this age of terrorism, the "trade-off" could be even less acceptable.

The second point that needs to be addressed is the statement that the Uniformed Division is cloaked by "a tarp of secrecy." Mr. Cooper infers that the Secret Service avoids publicity for less than honorable reasons. Mr. Cooper was advised that as a matter of policy, a number of things would not be discussed. As he mentions in his article, they are: manpower, equipment, methods, and cost.

Mr. Cooper makes light of this policy by quipping that: "This left plenty of room for discussion." Perhaps Mr. Cooper can afford to be cavalier in his comments, but the Secret Service cannot. Although the Secret Service always strives to be responsive to public inquiry, it would rather err on the side of caution than disclose information which could prove detrimental.

Finally, the Secret Service is not without public scrutiny. As one of its bureaus, the Secret Service routinely reports to the Treasury Department and Congress, which has budgetary and oversight responsibilities.

The men and women of that Secret Service Uniformed Division deserve more than the shots volleyed by Mr. Cooper.

ROBERT R. SNOW
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Snow is assistant director of the Office of Government Liaison and Public Affairs for the Secret Service.

Buckley's phone book

In his review of John Judis's biography of William F. Buckley Jr. ["The Conservative Mind: William Buckley," April], Nicholas Lemann says of Buckley that "his dream was a country run by thinkers." Actually, I've heard Mr. Buckley say on more than one occasion that he would much prefer a government run by the first 400 people in the Boston telephone directory than one run by the faculty of Harvard University. Doesn't sound very elitist to me!

ALAN H. LUXENBERG
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Nicholas Lemann replies:

As John Judis points out, Buckley's famous remark about the names in the phone book is not at all representative of his thinking. Buckley wouldn't want to be governed by the Harvard faculty because it is liberal, not because it is elite; within the conservative movement, he has consistently shied away from the populists (including his own publisher at *National Review*, William Rusher). Judis's book is filled with quotations from Buckley throughout his career that prove that Buckley is a heartfelt elitist who wouldn't consider the term a pejorative one.

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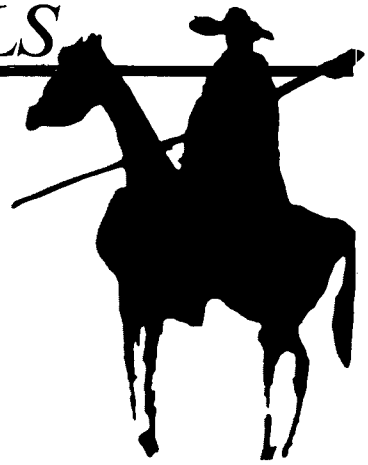
TILTING AT WINDMILLS



"PLAY KENO" urges the headline on a direct mail brochure sent to households in New York by the state lottery. The brochure contains a coupon that gives the bearer the right to play "for just 10¢—that's a 90¢ saving off the regular game price!" There may be a rational argument for the proposition that, since some people are going to gamble anyway, the state should be able to gain revenue from the practice. But how can we justify the state trying to lure people who have never gambled into what is certain to become an addiction for a good many of them?...

We live, of course, in the age of the exposé. And it is doubtless true that many of the facts we learn are instructive even when they are unpleasant. But there are some revelations that I think do absolutely no good. An example is the report some years back that Ginger Rogers's shoes were so tight during the filming of one of her dances with Fred Astaire that her feet bled. The result of this particular disclosure for me has been that whenever I see what I used to consider one of those magical Astaire-Rogers dance sequences, instead of being carried away with the beauty and the delight of it all, I sit there wondering if this is the scene where Ginger's feet were killing her....

When you get one of those glossy annual reports from a corporation, do you read it or toss it in the wastebasket? I would bet that 90 percent of the recipients are tossers. Yet publicly owned American companies spent $5.1 billion to produce these documents last year, when the essential information in them could have been transmitted for a tenth of that amount. Why are they wasting all this money when cost-cutting is so important to making us competitive? The reason is the puffery about, and the man-of-destiny photographs of, the CEO and other top officials. It seems clear that the primary purpose of these annual reports is the ego enhancement of corporate executives....

Several months ago full-page ads proclaimed a major expansion of *The Washington Post*'s sports section. I was delighted by the prospect, assuming that at long last the *Post* would pass my Night Baseball Box Score Test. For those of you who are not baseball fans, let me explain the meaning of the test. When night games are played in California, the box scores are not available until about 2 a.m., too late for most editions of eastern newspapers. Conscientious sports editors make sure that if the box score is missed today it will be

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repeated tomorrow in the editions that do not carry it. The tendency to be careless about this seems to increase as a newspaper achieves monopoly status. So when the *Washington Star* folded in 1981, I began to scrutinize the *Post*'s box score performance. It was miserable. But I was confident this would change with the newly expanded sports section. Such, alas, has not been the case. One of our readers, Roger Rubin, reports that in one four-day period in April, five boxes were missed and that five more were omitted in just one weekend later in the month.

The *Post*'s sports editor excuses this shoddiness on the basis that the different editions are not delivered to the same group of subscribers each morning, and that therefore he does not know who saw which box scores. There are two solutions to this. He could reprint the late box scores in all the following days' editions. Alternatively, he could ask Donald Graham to spend the money to make sure subscribers receive the same editions each day and that scores missed in any one edition are always printed in it the next day. This would be welcomed not only by baseball fans but by dance, music, and theater lovers, who frequently find that a review missing in the edition they receive one day is not run in the one they get the next day so they never see the review. . . .

Before we take leave of the *Post*'s sports section, I should deal with its other principal sin. Its columnists often provide us with examples of the New Journalism run amok. While two of them in particular write extremely well, they often seem to think that writing well is enough and that they have no obligation to assemble fresh facts to give substance to their style. A recent example was a column by Thomas Boswell on the 30-day suspension A. Bartlett Giamatti handed Pete Rose of the Cincinnati Reds for shoving an umpire. Boswell argued that Giamatti was wrong, but his article did not contain key facts that supported his case, facts that were available from the wire services and that showed the umpire in question had displayed prejudice toward the Reds. One sometimes suspects that the people at the *Post* not only feel above running wire service stories, they also feel above reading them. All of this is of little importance as applied to the sports section, but the Writer-Writer, who is too much of a hot-shot to do the reporting that is the essence of his craft, can be found in other more important parts of the paper, most notably the op-ed page, where he is often joined by the Thinker-Thinker, who also feels above reporting. . . .

Speaking of op-ed pages, there is another vice that has become characteristic of them. It is their standard length of around 750 words. The trouble with this length is that it defies the way the human brain works. Sometimes our thoughts come out as one sentence or one paragraph, sometimes as 10,000 words. On rare occasions they may actually weigh in at 750 words. But every op-ed writer has to act like that is his natural length for every piece. The result is sometimes articles that are too

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tightly condensed. More often it is padding that expands what would naturally be a sentence or a paragraph into the standard-sized serving of what thereby becomes 99 percent pure mush. . . .

When Paul Simon withdrew from the campaign, he said something that I wish Dukakis and Bush understood:

"Americans instinctively know that we are one nation, one family, and when anyone in that family hurts, all of us eventually hurt. There really is a yearning across this good land for leadership that appeals to the noble in us rather than to the greed in us."

Simon's failure to stand up to some liberal special interest groups may make this sound like hypocritical rhetoric, but I am convinced that it is potentially true and that the next president to attain greatness will do so in part at least because he assumes it is true. . . .

"The husband," according to *The Washington Times*, "is accused of beating and choking his wife with his hands and threatening to kill her before he ordered her to undress. Once she complied with his demands, the husband repeatedly raped his wife. After the attack, the husband began driving around with his wife in the car. The wife, in fear for her life, jumped out of the moving vehicle, resulting in injuries that kept her hospitalized for nine days."

The husband, despite this blatant brutality, cannot be charged with rape and has had to be indicted on lesser charges. Why? Because he lives in Maryland, which is one of 15 states that have laws precluding a husband being charged with rape unless the couple is divorced. . . .

When you're out driving and one of those giant double-trailer trucks looms in your rearview mirror, do you feel a trifle apprehensive? If you do, you are only being sensible, according to a recent study by the Insurance Institute of America. Those behemoths are two to three times more likely to be in crashes than other heavy trucks. And the people most likely to die in these crashes are in cars hit by the trucks. . . .

Far too often we send the wrong people to jail. Nonviolent criminals who pose no danger to society overcrowd cells that should be used to keep the violent away from the rest of us. The State of Minnesota has finally decided to halt this insane practice. It came up with sentencing guidelines that tell judges to send murderers, armed robbers, rapists, and muggers to prison but to give probation or a combination of local jail and probation to first offenders convicted of nonviolent crimes like car theft, forgery, or possession of marijuana. If the nonviolent offender repeats, he too can be sent to prison. But it's foolish to waste a cell on a first offender, who, in my experience as a lawyer, was, assuming he was not violent, the best bet for successful probation.

Sensible judges in other jurisdictions have their own equivalent of the Minnesota guidelines, but many other judges are either too tender to the violent or too tough on the nonviolent. Some violent criminals—those, for example, who harmed someone they loved in a fit of passion and feel such remorse that they will never hurt anyone else—do merit tenderness; and some nonviolent criminals—like Boesky or the Watergate gang who have committed massive fraud or betrayed a public trust—deserve the toughest sentences possible. But on the whole, the Minnesota guidelines are wise and the failure of other states to follow them is not only causing unjust sentences but also costing us a lot of money without giving us the protection prison is supposed to provide society. As Dr. Barry Krisberg, the president of the National Conference on Crime and Delinquency recently told "60 Minutes":

"We've doubled the number of people in prisons. The crime rate has not gone down. People don't feel safer, and the only measurable impact of this doubling of the prison population has been an extraordinary increase in the amount of money we're paying for punishment.". . .

I've previously noted in these pages the proliferation of administrators in the public schools. What do they do all day is the question that comes to mind, especially when we read of a 16-year-old student who walked out of his Washington, D.C. classroom and never returned. According to *The Washington Times*, "No school officials called his home."

The District's public schools simply ignore students who quit school after not having made it to the tenth grade by the time they are 16. These kids who have failed and fallen

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behind can leave and no one cares. Some of them may be hopeless cases, but that's not why the bureaucracy ignores their existence. The real reason is that not counting them keeps the official dropout rate down and spares the administrators embarrassment, which you must realize by now is the primary goal of public administration in America today. . . .

The papers are so full of stories about the underpaid civil service that most people must have been astonished by a recent report from the Associated Press about one job at the Department of Agriculture that had attracted 41 applicants. While a few government jobs are undercompensated and some are miserable for other reasons, the AP story states the general truth—that most jobs in the federal government pay well and are widely sought after, with many more applicants than openings. . . .

A recent study suggests that one way to keep kids in school—or more precisely to get them to school on time and to improve their academic performance—is for the school to give them a good breakfast each morning. Where can we get the money for such a program? That's easy—we just fire all those administrators who do nothing but write memos and attend conferences. . . .

My best guess is that we will have a woman or a black—or maybe both—as president before the end of this century. As the Catholics and Kennedy demonstrated in 1960, the southerners and Carter in 1976, and perhaps the Greeks and Dukakis will this year, a group that has been the victim of prejudice can elect one of its members president when the prejudice against the group declines to the point where its negative impact is exceeded by the positive effect of the enthusiasm of the group that sees itself vindicated by his—or her—victory. . . .

If lawyers rank as my pet peeve, doctors don't come far behind. But I am happy to report that in their case there is some sign that at last something is being done about the intern and resident slavery that has long been one of the more bizarre customs in American hospitals. When medical trainees are forced to work up to 120 hours a week so that the senior physician can take it easy, it breeds in them the self-pity that justifies the greed that has become the hallmark of American medicine. It also causes sometimes lethal errors by young doctors whose brains are numbed by fatigue. Now one state has acted to limit the working hours for interns and residents and five other state legislatures are considering such action. . . .

The educated elite, which avoided service in Vietnam, apparently does not want its children to know what happened there. *The New York Times* recently reported that while college courses on Vietnam have exploded in recent years and are now given in hundreds of schools across the country, the top universities are conspicuously *not* part of the trend. Seventy-five percent of them offer no courses at all on Vietnam. . . .

The war obviously remains a hot subject for the members of the liberal elite who lived through it. Perhaps they can finally attain an unthreatened sanity in thinking about it if the rest of us grant them the partial absolution they deserve. They were right to oppose the involvement of American troops, and they deserve great credit for that opposition. But they were wrong in opposing aid to the South Vietnamese, in not opposing the class bias of the draft that meant the poor and the lower middle class did the dying, and in leaving behind so many of the South Vietnamese whom our government had led to rely on us.

All this seems absurdly clear to me now, but such was not always the case as I lived through it. Too many of us

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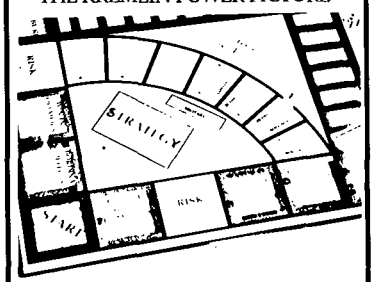

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were prone to self-righteous moralizing and practically everyone I know was badly wrong at one time or another. I, for example, failed to oppose the reduction of aid to the South Vietnamese in 1973-75. Aid may not have staved off the North's victory, but it was the least we could have done considering that the hole the South was in was one that we had been encouraging them to dig for more than a decade. You don't like to dwell on memories like that. For the affluent young men who evaded service while the blacks and the farmers and factory workers did the dying, the memories must be much harder to contemplate.

The self-deception involved was enormous. I remember in 1965 calling William Gorham, one of Robert McNamara's whiz-kids, to protest the inequities of the draft and being told that I was wrong and that the draft was completely fair. A year later Bill Moyers wrote an article for *The New York Times Magazine* saying how wonderful it was that the Army was giving opportunity to blacks. It was, as it turned out, an opportunity to die.

Today the same kind of self-deception is going on about military service, which the elite continues to avoid. Consider what I told you in last month's issue in the item on how few of the Marines who died in the Beirut bombing were from the upper class and then know that David S. Armor, a deputy assistant secretary of defense, has just assured *Insight* magazine "that those who claim the voluntary system's drawn disproportionately from the lower rungs of society are wrong."

The most incredible aspect of the Indochinese story is how little concern we have shown over the Khmer Rouge's massacre of millions of Cambodians. Compared to the immense outpouring of articles and books about Vietnam, journalists and scholars have barely touched this far greater tragedy. Did we in any way contribute to Pol Pot's rise to power? Could we have done anything to stop him? One would think these questions would command the attention of many of the best minds just as similar issues have done in the case of the Third Reich. . . .

Speaking of the military, Senator Carl Levin recently asked Donn Starry, a retired general and an expert on armor:

"If we went to war, our bullets and missiles would bounce off Soviet tanks?"

"That's correct," Starry replied. . . .

Law school enrollment, which had been dropping steadily over the past few years, is now on the rise again. This is dismaying for those of us who feel that more lawyers are not exactly what this society needs. Why has the gratifying downward trend been reversed? "LA. Law" is one factor, as Gerald Velman, the dean of the law school at Santa Clara University explained last month in the *Los Angeles Times*:

"I watched an episode the other night where Arnie Becker [the show's smooth-talking divorce lawyer] has this gorgeous actress dump $5,000 into his lap and unzip her jump suit. I'm sure there's a whole generation saying, 'Oh, wow, I want to be a lawyer.'". . .

Just as I wish that Bush and Dukakis understood Paul Simon's point about the need to appeal to the best in people, I wish they shared Jesse Jackson's ability to communicate on a direct human level. He moves me as none of the other candidates have. Consider these words he recently spoke to a group of black students in North Carolina: "I was born of a teenage mother. Jesse Jackson is my third name. I'm adopted. A teen-age mother who never really had a chance. And then finally a father who cared. I do understand.

"Born in a three-room house. Parents did not have health insurance. I understand. Bathroom on the back porch. Slop jar by the bed. I understand. Had to hang clothes on nail. I understand.

"Wallpaper used for windbreaker not decoration. I understand. Had to stand by an open stove to get heat. I really do understand. Could not eat turkey at 3 o'clock on Thanksgiving Day because Mama was preparing someone else's turkey at 3. We had to play football to entertain ourselves and then about 6 she would come from Mrs. Marshall's house and bring over the leftovers from Mrs. Marshall's house. I really do understand.

"I never earned the right to do less than my best. And you've not earned the right to do less than your best. And when you do your best, no mountain is too high, no valley is too low, no ocean is too wide.". . .

—*Charles Peters*

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What's A White Girl Like You Doing In A Place Like This?

Running a volunteer program for tough New York kids wasn't easy. But it was worth it.

by Suzanne Goldsmith

I was driving through a desolate Brooklyn neighborhood one day when a group of tough-looking black teenage males rescued me from what appeared to be certain death at the hands of an angry motorist. I was at the wheel of a 12-passenger van loaded with a couple of tons of USDA surplus food and ten members of the City Volunteer Corps. Our cargo, flour, powdered milk, rice, and cheese, was going to the elderly and handicapped who could not go shopping. I had not mastered the van, and at a difficult corner I brushed fenders with a car that had pulled into my blind spot. The driver, large and threatening, jumped out and began pounding on my window. He got a surprise: the doors of the van flew open, and five menacing teenagers piled out and surrounded him.

"She had the right of way!" said one, flexing his muscles. Another bent to examine a dent on the man's fender. "That's old, man. Years old." The others simply stared. Meekly, the driver backed away and got back in his car. "See, Suzanne?" said Reece, the one with the muscles. "We'll take care of you."

It was the fall of 1985 and I was a team leader in the City Volunteer Corps (CVC). Since graduating from college a few years earlier, I had been working at a public television station. I had been doing research for a documentary program on poverty in America, but reading Moynihan and Harrington reminded me that my knowledge of the other America was, at best, second-hand. The TV work took me to neighborhoods like Roxbury and Hyde Park, Boston, but only for fleeting visits. I wanted to get closer. I quit my job and moved to New York.

CVC, which in 1985 was only a year old, bills itself as a model national service program. Like other youth corps throughout the country, it recruits young people to do public service work for little pay, but with the promise of other rewards: solid work experience, scholarship money, and a chance to care for others. Unlike most other youth corps, which focus on backwoods conservation, CVC was designed to test youth service in an urban center. In addition to fixing up parks and buildings, volunteers tutor in schools, assist the frail elderly, help the handicapped, and feed the homeless. Similar programs have subsequently spread to other cities, including Boston and Philadelphia.

Supporters of national service programs can turn misty-eyed about the values of "community" and "service" such programs are meant to instill. I had a lot of that mist in me too when I joined CVC, but I soon learned that "community" and "service" meant reining in the restless and the rageful: firing volunteers for being absent, for stealing, or for acts of violence. I had no idea how much discipline my job would require, or how I would hurt when a graduate from my team squandered a bonus on gold

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jewelry instead of saving it for college or wound up jobless or on crack. In the end, I did feel that national service can promote these democratic values: we did become a community, and we did serve. But make no mistake, it was bruising.

The Corps contained about 700 volunteers when I joined. All New York City teenagers between the ages of 17 and 20 qualified if they had no criminal charges pending and cleared a drug test. While one of the Corps's stated goals was to recruit volunteers of all economic backgrounds and ethnic groups, 96 percent were black or Hispanic, most from poor neighborhoods. Seventy-five percent were high school dropouts. Some were fathers and mothers on public assistance. Some had had minor, or not-so-minor, brushes with the law. Many were upwardly mobile, recent immigrants from the Caribbean, Central America, or Southeast Asia who saw the Corps as an Americanizing experience—and a place to learn English. Mayor Koch, who started the program, had envisioned CVC as a social equalizer, but college-bound whites were not beating a path to CVC's door.

City Volunteers (CVs) work full time for a year in teams of 10 to 15. They also go to school at night, either preparing for college, for the high school equivalency exam, or studying English or basic literacy.

To promote esprit de corps, the volunteers are required to wear a uniform. This caused small rebellions: "accidentally" spilling paint on the sleeves, refusing to hem the pants, tearing off the logo. But others used their meager stipend—$80 a week—to have it professionally cleaned and pressed.

With a stipend so low, most live at home, but the big incentive is the promise of a $5,000 scholarship or $2,500 in cash if they stay a year. Even so, when I began at CVC only a quarter lasted a full year. (Today, 33 percent complete the program.) Roughly half of those who leave are asked to do so; the other half drop out. Of those who do graduate, only 6 percent take the full scholarship option. Another 13 percent take part cash and part scholarship. The rest take the cash in lump sum, many cashing their checks the day they receive them. Reece called me a month after he graduated to confess, sheepishly, that he had already spent his entire $2,500: he'd bought a bicycle, some gold, some leather pants.

Donut argue with me

My first day in the field, I was issued my own uniform: gray polyester chinos, heavy work boots, a baseball cap, gray bomber jacket, a red belt, and a red pin-striped shirt with an apple-shaped logo and epaulets to denote my rank. The pants were too long, so I hemmed them with scotch tape.

My assignment was to take over Team 17, whose leader, Reggie, had suddenly resigned. He was twice my size and carried a physical education degree and a don't-mess-with-me attitude. I didn't like his way of maintaining order. I had wonderful visions of my own style of leadership being different—firm but friendly, hands-on, leading by example. By using the carrot rather than the stick, I imagined I would make the volunteers want to do good.

Fat chance. I would have to begin with rules—not reasoning, not democracy, just letting everybody know I was boss. I was not used to this—in the first two months, I lost almost ten pounds because my stomach was in such knots that I simply couldn't eat.

I had a couple of days to observe Reggie before taking over. The first day, he delivered a harangue that lasted 90 minutes. They were in trouble for leaving early when he wasn't there. I got a chance to look some of the players over. They were a motley crew.

Tony was young and eager-looking, with a skimpy moustache. BeeBee was big and striking. She had narrowed her uniform pants to make them tight-fitting, and during Reggie's tirade she peered into a pocket mirror and adjusted her eye makeup. Rene kept shifting in his chair and making exasperated faces; Rhonda was asleep. Suzanne, pale and young-looking, with bright red hair, sat outside the circle against the wall. Brown, who had nappy hair and wore a large pendant in the shape of Africa, kept raising his hand to ask irrelevant questions. Zina was seven months pregnant—she could no longer wear her uniform pants. Later, I would learn to recognize pregnancies by one of the earliest symptoms: an open clasp on the snugly cut uniform pants.

I asked Reggie to show me how the team did P.T.—daily physical training was a required feature of life in the Corps. Reggie obliged, but by the team's response I got the impression that they did not do it very often. We walked out to Prospect Park in Brooklyn, and Reggie sat on a wall to watch while Rick led them through a series of halfhearted stretches and calisthenics.

No wonder they won't put any energy into it, I thought, if he won't do it himself. The next day, with Reggie gone, I led the team myself in exercises I remembered from, of all places, the Harvard fencing team. They barely tried to follow. Brown stood backwards. "I don't need to look, Suzanne. I can see out of the corner of my eye." When we got to jumping jacks, he would only bounce a little in place. "Can't do those. I got a loose stomach." Rhonda did arm circles like she had a pair of broken

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Later, I would learn to recognize pregnancies by one of the earliest symptoms: an open clasp on the snugly cut uniform pants.

wings. BeeBee: "I can't jump, Suzanne. I got my ministration." I decided it would take time for my enthusiasm to rub off.

The next day, however, I scored a minor victory—Reggie-style. Rene, a former Puerto Rican gang member who had hung up his colors and claimed to have been born again, arrived 15 minutes late, after we had all begun P.T. in front of the hospital. He glanced at the team and walked inside. Five minutes later, he re-emerged and leaned casually against the wall to watch us. He was eating a sugar donut. All eyes turned to me.

I started them on 150 counts of running in place and walked over to Rene. We stared at each other. "Are you planning to join us?"

"I ain't finish my breakfast."

"It's too late for breakfast now. Put it away."

Rene raised his voice. "How you expect me to exercise without eating nothing?"

I thought for a minute, then discarded the temptation to reason with him. "Either put it away and join us *now*, or go home."

Rene looked at me, looked sorrowfully at his half-eaten donut, then stuffed it in his jacket pocket and started running.

Dean wrote me a piece of advice. "I have some friends on the team. . . if they were to get a real job and the employer told them to do something they don't like, they might get fired. I think you shouldn't let no one get over."

Not everyone wanted to get over. In those early days Rick, the serious one who had demonstrated P.T. for me, often led the exercise sessions. New to the Corps, he wrote in his journal that the team was too immature and that he felt out of place. He prayed for the strength to stick with it. A few weeks after I started, Rick decided to quit the Corps and get a job. I tried to convince him to stay, but secretly I felt he had made a wise decision.

The next one to leave did not go voluntarily. Kenny had made me awkward from the start. The first thing he did when we met, in the elevator at Methodist Hospital, was check my hands to see if I was married. Later, when Reggie formally introduced me to the team, he warned, "Kenny thinks he's real macho, God's gift to the ladies. He thinks he's gonna have an easy time now he's got a lady team leader." Suddenly, Kenny's gold-toothed smile was a danger. Later that day he sidled up to me, put his arm around me, and murmured, "We gonna be real good friends." Sharply, I returned, "You better watch it." He slunk off angrily, and I felt ashamed. The next day I apologized to Kenny for being short with him, and said I wanted to be friends, "just not that kind." He beamed and thrust out his hand to shake.

The Dragon Lady's stains

Kenny wasn't around long; within two weeks he'd been separated—Corps vernacular for fired. I did not feel the anguish over losing Kenny that I would feel over later separations. He had stolen money from an old lady while dusting her bureau.

After questioning both of the boys who had been in Mrs. Sheridan's house the day she was robbed, I called a team meeting and everyone trooped into a small room. They were shocked. "A quarter I can see—but $200? That's messed up." Suspicious of Kenny: "Where'd you get that gold necklace? I didn't see that last week." Some of the reactions were against me: "Woulda never happened if Reggie was here." They asked me to leave the room. I went out, and Brown asked me to close the door. Later that day, Brown and Nancy pulled me aside. "You oughta talk to Dean," Nancy said. "He saw Kenny with a lotta money." Brown: "You gotta get them apart. Push them!" My instincts told me Kenny had taken

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the money, but I was afraid to play the arbiter.

I did question Kenny and Dean, each alone, and Dean said he had seen Kenny with two $100 bills—the denomination stolen. The CVs got only $80 a week. Kenny did not confess. I asked him to look me in the eyes and tell me he didn't take the money. He did. I fired him. I don't know what went on in that team meeting, and I can only guess that Kenny had never achieved the trust of the team. In later instances, I found that in most cases teammates would back one another up—even lie for each other. If I saw these situations as a test of their loyalty to me, or of how well my admonitions to honesty had penetrated, I was usually disappointed.

After Kenny's theft, the hospital we were working out of—providing assistance to homebound seniors—considered discontinuing the project, but they decided to give us another chance. Each day the team, organized in pairs, trooped into the volunteer office of the hospital to collect train and bus tokens to commute to their assignments. We worked out elaborate charts that plotted each client's schedule and needs, as well as each CV's class times.

The clients were mostly single women, a few couples. Most lived in small walkup apartments, in neighborhoods up and down the south side of Brooklyn: Park Slope, Sunset Park, Bay Ridge. Some were very poor; some seemed quite well off. All were white, and many were immigrants from northern Europe. Most of them were afraid of the City Volunteers. I always went to the home to introduce the volunteers on the first visit, and, in the first weeks of the project, they often called the Home Care office to request me as a volunteer. Over time however, they grew to understand that, despite their dark faces, the volunteers were not hoodlums.

Of all the CVs, Dean was the most beloved by his clients. Dean had joined the Corps almost immediately upon his arrival in the U.S.—in fact, his mother, who was living in New York, had signed him up while he was still with his father in Trinidad. Sometimes I would pay a surprise visit to find Dean doing jobs he had not even been asked to do: washing a floor that he had washed only three days earlier. While he vacuumed floors his partner, Rhonda, often sat and fanned herself, or dozed. Dean completed a year in the Corps. After graduation, he learned that the colleges would not credit his Trinidadian high school diploma, so he took the equivalency exam—and failed. Since then, he has been living at home doing construction work and preparing to take the exam again. He has saved $8,000 toward college.

Tony, who was small and also hard-working and wanted to become a cop, was paired with Rene, the ex-gang member with the temper. They called each other "homeboy"—they came from the same neighborhood—and Tony was often the only one who could calm Rene down. One day when Rene was absent, I went out as Tony's partner. Our client was a woman we called "the Dragon Lady," since she was impossible to please. Unlike most, she placed no magic trust in me because of my white face. She sent me to the store to pick up some frozen vegetables and fabric softener. When I returned, she counted her change carefully, then looked up. "There's at least a dollar missing," she said. I felt sick—I was not accustomed to being under suspicion. I began to protest, just as Tony reentered the room. "How much money did I give her?" she asked Tony. "Eight dollars," he remembered. "She didn't give me enough change," snarled the Dragon Lady. Tony pulled out his journal and a pencil, and I handed him the receipt. He did the calculations, and the Dragon Lady was satisfied.

"Don't worry about it," Tony said as we headed down to the laundry. "She does that all the time." I folded clothes and watched Tony earnestly scrubbing the Dragon Lady's stained and yellowing garments. I marveled.

Tony, like all CVs, was required to keep a journal. I marveled again when he showed me what he'd written about his visits to another Park Slope home: "I like Mr. Subie, you could say I have gotten attached to him. On Wednesday it was his birthday, he made 86 years. We had a party with lots of laughs and warmth. I feel bad when we leave. Especially on Fridays because he always says now I'm going to be alone again. Being alone is bad not having no one to talk to, to hold, to love or laugh with."

I lost track of Tony after he graduated. The last time we spoke, he told me he had signed up for the auxiliary police force. Rene dropped out of CVC after six months. He could not get along with the team and often showed up late, or not at all. He reenrolled in his high school, then dropped out again. Later, I heard he was driving a van for his church.

"I miss my girl"

Camp Wel-Met, the Parris Island of CVC, is where team leaders and volunteers get their training. I had hoped to go there before beginning my field service, but instead I was given a team to supervise immediately and was not trained until three months later. The camp, a remote huddle of cabins in the Catskills, is not only a training ground but a place to screen out volunteers who don't have what it takes. Ten to 20 percent of the recruits ask to leave, or are told to, during what one team leader called

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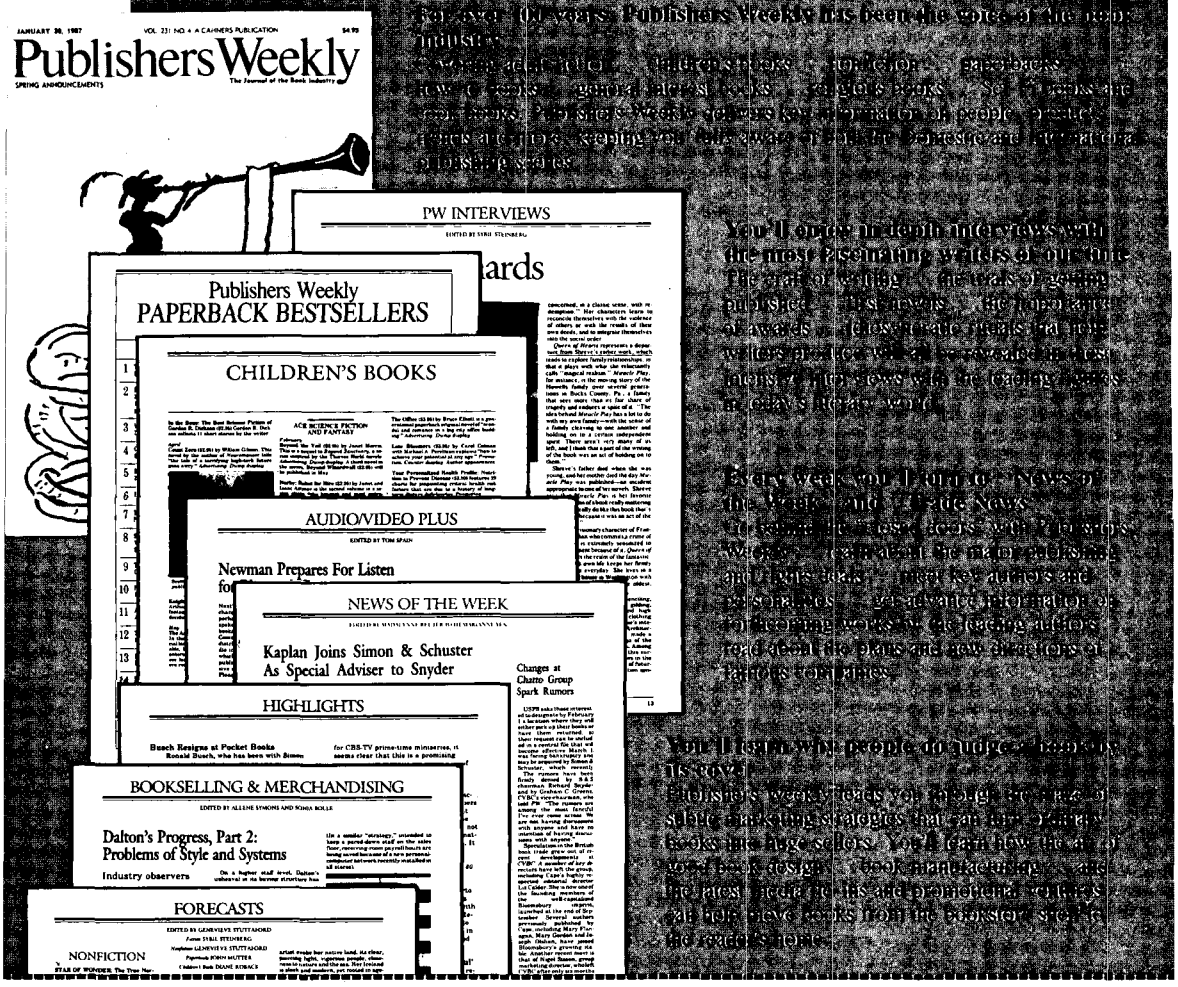

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"a seven-day stress test." After a full year in the Corps, if you ask the grads what they are proudest of, many will tell you, "Making it through training." In fact, for my first three months, I lacked authority in some volunteers' eyes because I had not yet met the test.

By the time I went to camp, I was more fearful than excited. The more boastful team leaders (T.L.s) had impressed me with stories of being challenged by the new recruits and demonstrating their toughness. "I always N.B.O. at least one," said one T.L., referring to the training staff's policy of sending those who break the rules on the Next Bus Out. "It shows the others I mean business."

The team leaders go to camp the day before the recruits so that all is ready when they arrive. On the first morning, we heard the three buses honk their horns just before they got to camp. As they rounded the bend, we moved out in formation. One hundred-thirty teenagers rolled off the buses, looking dazed and carsick, and traipsed down the path where we were stationed every six feet. They had to walk between us—the idea was to intimidate any troublemakers and prevent anyone from stashing drugs in the woods where they could retrieve them after the baggage search.

The baggage search was one of the most depressing experiences I had in my year as team leader or in the subsequent 17 months I spent as an administrator in the Corps. Twenty suitcases had to be dismantled entirely—socks unrolled, pants pockets and hems checked, bras and panties fingered and squeezed, jars and bottles sniffed and scrutinized. Some of the trainees had packed as if for several months' stay. Others had very few clothes: a couple of shirts, a thin sweater, one pair of pants. One girl had washed everything she owned and packed it wet—presumably she did not have access to a dryer. The girls eyed me nervously and shifted from foot to foot, but they were cooperative. I think I was more conscious of the violation of their privacy than they were. But the search was not in vain. One young man had a vial of crack in his bag; another found the experience so trying that he cursed at one of the trainers. The two went on the Next Bus Out.

I was assigned 17 recruits, all new to one another. All but one were black or Hispanic. They included a boy who was taking a year off from the City University to gain direction and a scholarship; a woman who had grown up on a New Mexico Indian reservation, moved with her mother and her own baby to Queens, served time on Riker's Island for throwing a home-made pipe bomb into a housing project, and joined the Corps to get her act together; a recent immigrant who cried one night out of fear that his grandmother, still in Haiti, was under attack; and a girl who, despite endless counseling, had dropped out of high school. Our goal was to form a team in spirit as well as in name. As for why I was there, some of them wondered. Those who had heard of Harvard felt sure I could be earning more money elsewhere. And why would I leave a glamorous TV job? Either I'd been fired or I must be a sucker.

The first night, I asked the group to set a goal for the week. They chose "no N.B.O.s"—they would help each other make it through the seven days. One of the first challenges was to get the whole team over a 13-foot wall, without ropes or ladders. Those who had gone over could not help those who had not, so the last person had to scale the wall in a flying leap. On most training teams, there is at least one tall athlete for whom this is no sweat. On our team, as on most, there was also one extremely overweight volunteer who had to face down many fears and who required both the emotional and physical support of the team to "make it." Yolanda cried a good deal before stepping up into the interlaced fingers of her teammates. They had to do most of the work for her—the emotional effort of putting herself in that situation was so great. She was hauled limply over the top by Reece, who was sitting atop the wall. Afterward she was resplendent.

On the next-to-last day of camp, the team was scheduled to meet the "zip wire"—a much-touted challenge. It involves strapping yourself into a harness, climbing a 50-foot ladder, then jumping off a platform to glide along a wire stretched 300 feet across a lake. It's no Evel Knievel feat, but it does require overcoming your fear of jumping. As we were waiting our turns, I noticed Reece standing apart from the group, his head bowed against a tree. It was bitterly cold, and he had only a thin winter jacket. I thought perhaps he was beginning to suffer from frostbite, or perhaps he was frightened of the zip. After I sat with him for a long while, he finally spoke, in a rough whisper. "I never had people pulling for me like this. I miss my girl, and I want to go back, but it's not like this in Brooklyn."

The team made their goal of no N.B.O.s, and at the graduation ceremony they were recognized for that accomplishment. We all hugged; a few of us even cried.

Mike's big stick

Harold was one of five members of my training team who joined my permanent team back in New York City. He lived with his mother and many of his ten brothers and sisters in the Bronx. He pos-

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I had wonderful visions of my style of leadership—firm but friendly, hands-on, leading by example. By using the carrot rather than the stick, I imagined I would make the volunteers want to do good. Fat chance.

sessed a glorious smile and a talent for comedy. He was also often nasty, rude, and full of rage. And, more than any other volunteer I met, Harold had an exquisite sensitivity to injustice. A woman we worked with once said to him, "Harold, you are a righteous brother." Harold asked me, one day when we were giving an iron fence in Kissena Park a fresh coat of black paint, how I would feel if the black paint spilled on my white skin. "Would you be mad? Would you be ashamed?"

I fired Harold for striking out at a white woman who "dissed" him—showed him disrespect. The team was manning voter registration booths in Bushwick, one of Brooklyn's most destitute neighborhoods. We saw only one white woman all day. Somehow, an altercation developed between Harold and this woman, who looked like a schoolmarm, and she, defiant, ripped up her registration form. Harold leaped at her, screaming obscenities. Tony had to hold him back. Harold told me he would have expected me to take the white person's side. I was deeply hurt. Later, to my surprise, he said, "I'm sorry I said that." I nearly cried.

Mike, like Harold, had grown up in a tough neighborhood: Crown Heights, Brooklyn. He had served time on Riker's Island for repeated grafitti offenses. He had a fashionable Louis Vuitton suit of denim lined with leather, and one warm day in April he came to paint a mile-long park fence wearing a fur jacket. "The lock on my closet's broken and if I don't wear it, my brother will steal it," he said. Mike, who considered himself a ladies' man, was surprised when I told him I was only 25 years old. "My girlfriend's 27," he said. "She's got big stomach." Sometimes he called me Mommy.

Despite the fact that his girlfriend was pregnant, Mike fell for another member of the team, named Lucy. While "cohabitation" was frowned upon in the Corps, it was always a strong possibility. In this case it was doubly illicit, since both Mike and Lucy were already parents. He wrote in his journal once that Lucy had told on him to his girl. "I had to lie my ass off," he wrote, "and guess what? I got out of it."

Lucy was pretty and sassy, Puerto Rican, with long, shining black hair. At 17, she had a two-year-old child, Liliana, whom she talked about incessantly. On Fridays, Lucy would cash her stipend immediately and buy Pampers. Lucy combined a surprising maturity with bouts of extreme childishness. Once, when she was angry with me, she put on her Walkman and began singing loudly, finally jumping up on a dumpster and dancing in a frenzy.

Most often, however, I was a sister, and we got along best when I gossiped with her and entertained her suggestions on how to do my hair. (She suggested a generous slathering of Vaseline.) There were times when Lucy showed tremendous strength—and the quality of her work was impeccable.

One morning I ran into Mike on the L train to Bushwick, and we talked about Lucy as we rode together for a couple of stops. Mike said that Lucy had been bothered by a man at the subway station the previous day and had asked him to stay near her. I knew the story and also what Mike didn't know: that the man was Lucy's father.

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The previous day, Lucy had breathlessly told me a man in the station had harassed her, said she was his daughter, and that she had stolen his wallet. He tugged at her necklace, grabbed her purse, and threw it on the track. Lucy giggled about it in front of the others and acted incredulous but somehow let me know there was more to the story, so I followed her when she went to the ladies' room. She dissolved into tears. "Suzanne. . .that was my father!"

Lucy's parents had been estranged since she was small. Months earlier, in the confessional atmosphere of training camp, Lucy told me that when she was pregnant with Liliana, she had traveled out to a housing project in Coney Island where her grandmother lived to get her father's address. When he saw her, however, he had cursed at her and said she was not his child.

When Mike and I got off the train at Bushwick Avenue that morning, we saw Lucy walking toward us from the other end of the platform. She looked gray. "It's that man," she said, and looked away. A man was following her, calling drunkenly. He seemed too far gone to be dangerous. I tried to distract him.

Mike disappeared. The man followed me down the rickety stairway. Once down, I turned to him, just as Mike appeared from around the corner of an abandoned building, carrying a long, splintered wooden plank. He brought it across Lucy's father's face with a crack that would echo in my head for weeks afterward. The man crumpled in a doorway.

In a moment, Mike was gone. Lucy stood rooted to the spot, eyes wide. And then she began screaming, with tears streaming down her face, "It was your own fault! It was your own fault!"

I suppose his nose was broken, for he bled profusely, but he probably felt little. I left him as soon as an ambulance had been called. Mike was in a sort of shock—he couldn't believe the man whose face he had smashed was his girlfriend's father. I tried to console him; he was just trying to protect Lucy. "And you!" he said.

I reported the incident to my supervisor, who reported it to the director of operations. They decided that Mike should be separated for a "criminal act." Three weeks later, Lucy telephoned the director of operations. She said that what had happened was her fault. She had asked Mike to protect her. She had not told him that the man was her father. Mike was reinstated in the Corps. Until then, I hadn't realized that Lucy had orchestrated the whole event. Perhaps she had not realized it either.

Soon after, Mike and Lucy both reached their sixth month in the Corps. They dropped out, despite their initial intentions of staying a year. Lucy used her $1,000 "readjustment allowance" to buy a bedroom set for Liliana. When I last spoke with her, she was working the phones for Sears, Roebuck. I hear she had a second baby, by the same father as the first. Mike now works in a midtown Manhattan mailroom and studies electrical installation at night.

Crime and punishment

My last CVC project had us tutoring elementary school children at P.S. 397 in East Flatbush. The room in which we held our meetings was also used to store the candy the children were selling to raise money for the school. A report reached me that Susan had been stealing boxes of the candy—this after having been suspended three times and having lied to me on countless other occasions. Because she was cool (she wore the right jewelry; she knew where the parties were), Susan was popular on the team, and they tolerated her laziness and dishonesty. It was her eleventh month, and I had come to believe that she would graduate.

Over the next week, I heard the accusations from others on the team, and when a count was taken, several boxes of candy were indeed missing. I called a team meeting and explained what I had heard. I said I thought that I should separate Susan. Several CVs spoke up, and said that was unfair—I hadn't seen Susan take the candy.

I let them decide. Susan could testify, as could her accusers, and the team could vote on her guilt or innocence, and determine her punishment. I would abide by their decision. Susan, as well as the others, agreed this was fair. After a long and painful trial, Susan was found guilty. The team voted, unanimously and in her presence, to separate her.

It was a grim moment, but it was a milestone. We had broken the code of silence. I called it breaking the homeboy barrier—the tendency to protect your buddies, even when they are wrong. In succeeding days, individuals would seek me out and tell me how sick they had become of covering up for Susan's lies and petty thefts. They seemed relieved that she was gone.

Later, Susan telephoned me, and, sobbing hysterically, she begged me to reconsider. "You don't know what it's like, Suzanne," she said. "You're white. You went to Harvard. You can have anything you want." The words were like blows, but I was, as earlier I might not have been, able to sort out my guilt feelings from her guilt. I did not reconsider.

Susan is in college now, studying social work. She sometimes visits the CVC office and we chat amicably. Perhaps it was a relief to her, too—finally to be told she could not get over all the time. □

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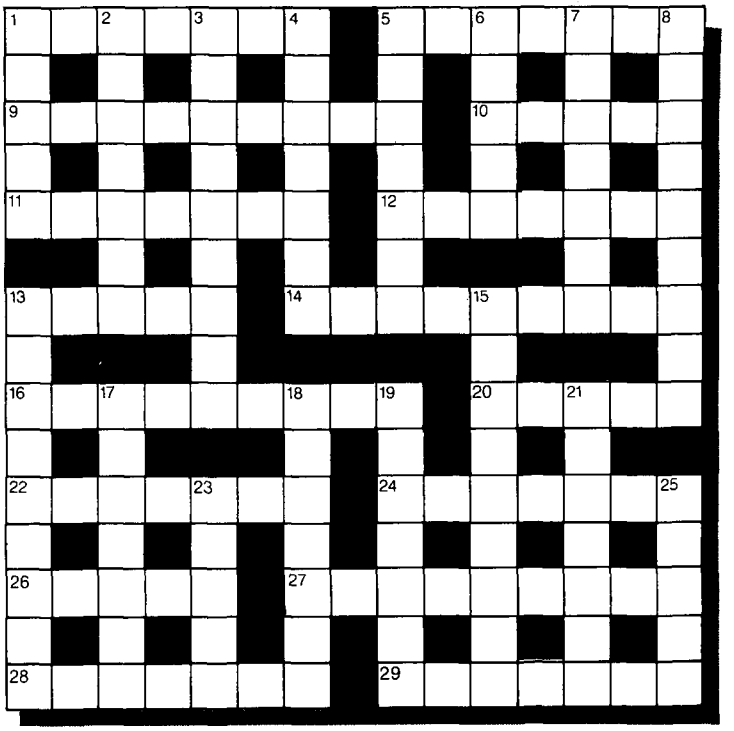
POLITICAL PUZZLE

by John Barclay

The numbers indicate the number of letters and words, e.g. (2,3) means a two-letter word followed by a three-letter word. Groups of letters, e.g. USA, are treated as one word.



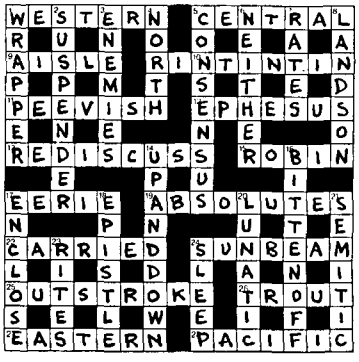
ACROSS

1. Major party lost around printed choices. (7)
5. Projectiles bustle around awful end. (7)
9. They recently passed, last month, a garden—Eliot's first. (9)
10. More genteel Riviera address? (5)
11. Kind of brown back river comes easy. (7)
12. Type of theater found around North Peoria. (4-3)
13. Foreign extraction abused, *i.e.*, sin. (5)
14. Anger about two-set sin. (9)
16. Posting distributed in ship for warnings. (4,5)
20. Word for car that might not make it? (5)
22. Navigating suave New England routes. (7)
24. More precipitous mountain? (7)
26. Inspires fuel afterthought. (5)
27. Intricate pin shapes give pleasure. (9)
28. Coal pit mined for headquarters. (7)
29. Orantes running for office in 1988. (7)

DOWN

1. Confused deb in, then out, as candidate. (5)
2. Places where ace lost mysteriously. (7)
3. Attendants groomed Erie's lord. (9)
4. Took out of order and lost kind of playfield. (7)
5. Clerics stores came in second. (7)
6. Vigorously clean weapon. (5)
7. Unsteady valence surrounded compound. (7)
8. Overwhelmed, other side purrs. (9)
13. Sentimental coasting haphazardly around fifty. (9)
15. Popular fee for college knowledge? (9)
17. Begins Poe's pun in a different way. (5,2)
18. Travelling logo has alternate energy source. (7)
19. Fixes sloppy caress around April 2. (7)
21. In a term, fancy clothing. (7)
23. Angry about occurrence in group's etymology. (5)
25. One errs constructing part of flight. (5)

Answers to last month's puzzle:



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The (THWAK!) Deregulation of (THUMP!) Pro Wrestling

The bureaucrats behind Hulk Hogan

by Irvin Muchnick

Wahoo McDaniel's Indian-strap match against Gorgeous Jimmy Garvin started out as just another day at the office. When he was supposed to bleed (or, as they say in the business, "juice"), Wahoo slipped a razor blade out from under his wrist band. Then, while Gorgeous Jimmy and his valet, Precious, distracted the crowd by arguing with the referee, Wahoo nicked a clump of scar tissue near his own scalp. His brow gushed copiously, and the ten thousand fans at Veterans Stadium popped with excitement.

Wahoo had juiced himself dozens, maybe hundreds of times in his career, but never with such portentous consequences as at the Great American Bash in Philadelphia in July 1986. This time a piece of razor blade got lost in the gnarls of his scar tissue, where it stuck like a golf cleat to a wad of chewing gum. Wahoo, formerly a punishing linebacker in the old American Football League, worked the rest of the bout with the blade in his noggin. When he returned to the dressing room, the chairman of the Pennsylvania State Athletic Commission, James J. Binns, saw the mess at close range. Binns ruled that there would be no more juice at the Great American Bash, or ever again in his jurisdiction. "Some of these guys have foreheads that look like raised atlas maps," Binns later told *The Philadelphia Inquirer.*

For Virgil Runnels (better known to wrestling fans as Dusty Rhodes, the American Dream), the commissioner's edict was worse than a whack with arch-rival Ric Flair's gold championship belt. Rhodes is chief booker for the National Wrestling Alliance. While the World Wrestling Federation may sell itself as family entertainment, Dusty's minions appeal to the hard core.

Infuriated by Binns, Dusty Rhodes nevertheless took a back seat to his tag-team partners: the lawyers. Eighteen months later, after intense lobbying by the industry and a critical report by an audit committee of the state legislature, the American Dream won. The Pennsylvania House of Representatives voted to put the athletic commission in a permanent sleeperhold, thereby removing any bureaucratic impediments to razor blades. The state senate is expected to follow suit. Commissioner Binns has resigned. Pennsylvania thus seems poised to join Connecticut and Delaware as states that have dereg-

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ulated wrestling in the past five years and swelled to 19 the ranks of the states in which the sport is unsupervised. Of course, in some states that might be an improvement. As wrestling spins and kicks its way into a $300 million a year business, state governments have created a bizarre regulatory maze that omits the rules most needed and erects ones where none are needed at all. But when it's the industry versus the regulators, it's usually the regulators that go down for the count.

The Ugandan Headhunter

You're probably wondering if pro wrestling is a true competition. No, Virginia, it is not. Its action, though dangerous and often surprisingly spontaneous, is choreographed. The matches themselves are a kind of brutal ballet in which the performers improvise the "spots" communicating through whispers and body language to create the illusion of violent combat until the scripted finish. Promoters call the shots, usually through backstage agents, who decide who gets pushed and who generally ensure that the feuds circulate with all the freshness of "Dallas" subplots.

The first pro wrestling exhibitions in America were run out of carnival tents in the nineteenth century. The sport spread to cities in the 1920s, becoming a sensation on television in the late forties and fifties with shows like "All-Star Wrestling" on the old DuMont network.

Even then, regulators were having trouble keeping the sport under control. Fortunately, riots haven't been a serious problem in New York since Antonino Rocca sparked a brawl at the old Madison Square Garden in 1957. An estimated 500 fans joined in that fray, which left two cops and several bystanders injured and 200 chairs broken. Prodded by a vigilant commission, the chastened promoters thereafter instituted the practice of blaring "The Star-Spangled Banner" over the public-address system at the conclusion of every controversial Rocca bout. While the partisans stood neutralized, security forces would spirit the bad guys out of harm's way.

One of those villains, Dick the Bruiser, kept getting into so many fracases in New York State that in his words, "I was suspended longer than the Brooklyn Bridge." Years later, when I asked the Bruiser how he managed to get himself reinstated, he winked and replied, "I called my mother." Dick the Bruiser's mother, for the uninitiated, happened to be Indiana's Democratic National Committeewoman, Margaret Afflis Thompson.

Pro wrestling went into orbit in the brave new world of video. The current Barnum of Bounce is third-generation promoter Vince McMahon, hypemeister and head of the Connecticut-based World Wrestling Federation. He looks like Alfalfa from "The Little Rascals" might have had he pumped iron. He's also a marketing genius. Today the WWF generates more revenue from such sources as pay-per-view cable television (where viewers dole out cash for each show) as well as videocassettes, kids' dolls, and T-shirts, than it does from live ticket sales. Since the company is privately held it has not released its revenues. Its haul has been estimated at around $150 million a year.

In most states boxing and wrestling have been lumped together in a peculiar regulatory scheme. The favored term, "athletic commission," overstates its purview. (More accurate is the name of Washington D.C.'s Boxing and Wrestling Commission—whose chairwoman, Cora Wilds, incidentally, resigned last year after reports of her double-billing of expenses.) Across the country commissions range from independent, governor-appointed supervisory panels to the cobwebbed corners of departments of state or labor or consumer affairs.

The commissions' promotion of safety standards for boxing is heavily subsidized by rasslin'. In New York, for example, wrestling generated $302,262 in 1987—almost three times as much as boxing. Even in California, where boxing events are staged more often than any other state, wrestling revenues last year brought in more than double those of the sweet science ($271,806 to $122,292) through a 5 percent tax on gate receipts.

Beyond tax collection, the standard justification for wrestling regulation comes from people like Marvin Kohn, deputy commissioner of the New York State Athletic Commission. Kohn argues that promoters have always wanted a government superstructure because "we lend credibility to their product."

In New York State, credibility seethes from part 225 of the athletic commission's rules. In Section 225.2 there's the concession that we're dealing with "exhibitions only." On the other hand, Section 225.11 asserts, that's no excuse for "unfair or foul tactics" such as "striking, scratching, gouging, butting, or unnecessarily punitive strangleholds." (Necessarily punitive strangleholds will always have their place.) Miscreants are cautioned that "unsportsmanlike or physically dangerous conduct or tactics" can result in disqualification. And let's not forget proper ring attire: fans of Kimala, the Ugandan Headhunter, and of Brutus (The Barber) Beefcake can sleep soundly knowing that the type and color of their trunks were approved by the commission, in accordance with Section 225.19.

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The commission is charged with protecting the health and safety of its participants but doesn't neglect the financial protection of various hangers-on. Take Jose Torres the $68,000-a-year chairman, ex-light heavyweight boxing champ and Norman Mailer's pre-Jack Abbott literary protege. In New York, no wrestling takes place without the presence of ring inspectors, who get $39 per event and are responsible, among other things, for making sure the corner turnbuckle pads are securely in place. Their service is greatly appreciated by George (The Animal) Steele, who as part of his act frequently lunches on them both during and after his bouts.

The Animal, a former Detroit high school teacher with a heart irregularity, is more leery of the official commission doctor, who checks the blood pressure of all wrestlers before they perform. A 1985 show at the Nassau Coliseum featured a steel-cage match between Captain Lou Albano, then 52 and grotesquely obese, and Classy Fred Blassie, the Hollywood Fashion Plate, then 69 and with an artificial hip that forced him to walk with the aid of a cane. Thanks to the attending physician, we have it on good authority that Albano's and Blassie's diastolic readings passed muster.

The wrestler's lobbyist

Other states set an equally inspiring example. In Maryland, wrestling promoters must set aside two ringside rows at every show for commission officials. In Missouri, the most heated issue is a ban against jumping off the top rope; to say the least, this prohibition cramps the style of Jimmy (Superfly) Snuka, the acrobatic Polynesian whose coup de grace consists of diving onto his supine victim. In Oregon, they recently banned the blade; now when Portland fans clamor for blood, wrestlers simply do it "the hard way," grinding a knuckle into each other's foreheads or rubbing against ropes or ring posts.

In New Mexico, the blood-pressure tests are always a hassle because of the high altitude and spicy Mexican food. The big, wasted black man who bills himself as The Junk Yard Dog once flunked half a dozen times in Albuquerque before finally getting his pressure down to an acceptable level. Meanwhile, the show was juggled so JYD could go on later—making this the only known case of a wrestler's being switched from the semi-main to the main event because of concerns over his health.

In Pennsylvania, the Byzantium of wrestling regulation, the buckets of red blood are matched by rolls of red tape. Long before the Wahoo McDaniel contretemps, the World Wrestling Federation complained about an official ringside commission table, which always had to be covered with a white tablecloth. The table's sharp corners threaten to cause far more injuries than the cushioned mats that WWF wrestlers collapse on when they're tossed outside the ring. But if the commission folds, as is expected, so might the table.

In 1972 an overeager commissioner named Joe Cimino ordered the strict enforcement of *all* amateur-style rules. At a Pittsburgh show, his referee dutifully set about disqualifying wrestlers left and right for fake punches, hair-pulling, and use of the ropes; an hour's worth of scheduled matches lasted a mere 22 minutes. Since the show was being shot live for TV, this left 38 minutes, but those watching at home got a treat: an unrehearsed, honest-to-God, on-camera shouting match between Cimino and wrestler Bruno Sammartino.

So when the Pennsylvania athletic commission came up for review last year under a 1981 sunset bill, the wrestling community was only too eager to air its complaints. As it turned out, however, some of the best dirt came from people within the commission itself. The audit committee learned of turf battles between the executive director, a full-time staff official, and the commissioners, who were paid on a per diem basis to attend meetings and events but tried to direct the day-to-day operations. Further blurring the flow charts was a confusing district system, which had different commissioners enforcing different guidelines in each section of the state.

The auditors didn't go so far as to recommend abolishing the commission—only cutting the numbers of deputies and trimming its authority. But once their report reached the legislature, the World Wrestling Federation's savvy lobbyists pulled the levers on the fate of the beleaguered agency as expertly as Macho Man Savage throws a flying elbow. At a September 1987 show in Hershey, they handed out complimentary tickets, hors d'oeuvres, beer, and soda to the chairman of the state house Government Committee and more than 20 staff members of the Governor's Office of Legislative Affairs and the Department of State. Three months later the vote flattened the commission.

But it was the legislation's fine print that really rang the bell: not only was the state wrestling tax reduced from 5 percent to 2 percent, but the surety bond for promoters was raised from $3,000 to $10,000. Dave Meltzer, publisher of the *Wrestling Observer*, an insider newsletter, notes that this last provision will have the effect of helping major promotions like the WWF and the NWA by shutting out smaller independent operators. "In other words, as usual, Vince McMahon got exactly what he wanted," Meltzer concludes. You better believe it. □

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MEMO OF THE MONTH

STATE OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF MENTAL RETARDATION AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

ARTHUR Y. WEBB
Commissioner

44 HOLLAND AVENUE • ALBANY • NEW YORK • 12229

ELIN M. HOWE
Executive Deputy Commissioner

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: All Central Office Employees

FROM: Lewis T. Boxwell
Business Officer

DATE: February 25, 1988

SUBJECT: Business Hours

The Business Office has recently been experiencing a significant increase in its workload. In an effort to improve efficiency and productivity we must limit the business hours.

Effective March 1, 1988, business hours for Central Office employees will be as follows:

10:30 to 11:30 a.m.
1:30 to 2:30 p.m.

Payroll checks will continue to be issued by Central Services on the first floor at the usual time.

Questions should be addressed to Brad Douville of my staff at 473-1342.

LTB:BD:cp

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On "West 57th Street" a congressional aide criticized Social Security. Now he's out of a job.

The Saturday Night Massacre

by Matthew Cooper

On a Saturday night in April, the pounding saxophones and rapid-fire shots of youthful reporters that introduce CBS's "West 57th Street" segued into a 13-minute report on the "elderly lobby." There were numbers: with 28 million members, the American Association of Retired Persons is twice as large as the AFL-CIO. There were sound bytes: "The elderly vote is political clout," said Mel Levitt, an AARP activist in Florida. There was dissent: Bruce Babbitt, recently obliterated in New Hampshire and Iowa, complained that criticism of Social Security and other entitlements had become "a forbidden subject."

But the person who got the most airtime was a 32-year-old writer named Phillip Longman. Short, bearded, and a little soft-spoken, he's made a livelihood examining and criticizing policy toward the elderly. He's worked on Capitol Hill and at think-tanks, knocking out speeches and articles about rising mortgages for the young and ballooning Social Security payments for the elderly. He's been in *The Atlantic*, *The New Republic*, and *The Washington Monthly*; he's done interviews with Denver radio stations and chatted on the set of the "CBS Morning News." And, as you might figure, he's got a book (*Born to Pay: The New Politics of Aging in America*).

That Saturday night, as Longman chimed in about gray power, he offered this incendiary thought: "What we've got is a system that pays out most of its benefits to people who are middle-class and more affluent, while not providing enough benefits for the poor to bring them up above the government's own poverty line.

"This is a scandal."

So was what happened when Longman came to work the following Monday at the Capitol Hill office of Rep. Kenneth H. "Buddy" MacKay, a Florida Democrat. Besides writing his own articles, Longman had been writing speeches and legislation bearing MacKay's name. That morning, the phones started ringing. They were not calls complimenting Phillip on his fine performance.

"We got several phone calls that expressed dismay," says Gregg Farmer, MacKay's administrative assistant, adding that while they didn't number that many, they were the kind you return quickly. "These were people who were strong supporters and very influential people," he says.

A couple of weeks later, Longman was fired. Everyone involved, however, describes it as the sweetest of separations, calling it inevitable given the clamor. MacKay himself explains it by saying: "I feel very kindly towards Phillip, and I'm sorry this happened. I was being dragged into an argument that was not mine. . . .The position of being an advocate and a staff person don't easily coincide." (Of

Matthew Cooper is an editor of The Washington Monthly.

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course, Longman hadn't exactly been operating under a gag order, and his politics were no secret when MacKay hired him. While on the MacKay payroll he was out hustling for his book on dozens of radio and TV shows, even appearing on PBS's "Nightly Business Report," which originates in Florida.) Still, Longman says he sees MacKay as a victim, too. "If anyone has a right to be angry, I do," he said. "And I'm not angry." Farmer calls him a "talented writer and a friend."

Were the calls organized? It's hard to say, but it seems fishy. After all, since he wasn't identified on the show as a member of MacKay's staff (only as a "Washington policy analyst") an outraged resident of Florida's 6th District would have had to devote his Sunday to some pretty spectacular sleuthing to find out where Longman worked. Few calls came into CBS about the piece, says the segment's producer, Steven Reiner, and none about Longman in particular, so it's doubtful anyone got MacKay's name from the network. So whoever called already knew Longman was on staff.

Why the fuss? Phillip Longman violated one of the great taboos of American politics: saying something bad about entitlements. Of course, his sound byte was not the first transgression. In 1985, when the new chairman of the Democratic National Committee, Paul Kirk, suggested that, maybe, entitlements might have to be restricted to those in need, he did what few thought possible: he brought Democrats together—to rebuke him. Kirk quickly took it back. "I should not have mentioned the possibility of a means test," Kirk said. "Our party, led on this issue by Claude Pepper, is unilaterally opposed to any cuts in Social Security." In 1984, Donald Regan had the audacity to tell "Meet the Press" that "[At] the lower end of the scale we shouldn't do anything to Social Security. But at the upper end we should reexamine it." The White House rushed to distance itself from the remarks. He was attacked on the Senate Floor by the Majority Leader Robert Byrd, who said that trusting the Reagan administration to protect Social Security is like "trusting a pyromaniac to guard your firewood." Just last fall, the AARP's own executive director, Jack Carlson, was forced out of office. His crime? Reports have cited his preference for private solutions to the problems of the elderly, such as a "reverse mortgage" plan that would allow the senior citizens to sell their homes to pay for medical care.

Phillip Longman's unexpected vacation won't rank as one of the world's great tragedies. But it's a perfect illustration of the country's political gridlock. As a society, we've become incapable of talking about the $400 billion in entitlement programs that are doled out regardless of need. It doesn't matter if the issue is raised by an honorable man, in an articulate, reasonable way. He still winds up having to redo his resume.

Table pounding

Phillip Longman's path to becoming a pariah began innocently enough. The son of an ad executive and a nursing school professor, he grew up in Montclair, New Jersey. At Oberlin, he studied philosophy, and when he graduated in 1979, he got a job as a writer at the *New Jersey Monthly*, a kind of grab bag of writing about politics, culture, and where to buy good sushi. Longman wrote the magazine's history column (still have your copy of "Blasts from the Past: The Worst Disasters in New Jersey History?"). He did profiles of gubernatorial candidates and TV weathermen.

Longman also found himself writing about the cost of a home and, as he recalls, "how come nobody my age could afford one." A whole slew of policies, he discovered, had made it easier for his parents' generation to buy homes. Zoning ordinances, restricted credit, and minimum acreage requirements had left people his age paying $800 a month for a one-room walk-up. As he later wrote in *The Washington Monthly*, the average 30-year-old male in 1973 doled out 21 percent of his income in mortgage payments for a medium-priced house. By 1984 that had jumped to 44 percent.

A child in the actuarial wilderness, he began picking up real page-turners, like the Census Bureau's *Household and Family Characteristics* or back issues of the *Federal Home Loan Bank Board Journal*. "A few years ago I could not have done this without the computer," says Longman. "But you know I don't crunch the numbers, I report them."

Gradually, a kind of Longmanian worldview came into focus. It had a populist twist. For instance, in a 1982 piece for this magazine, he noted that 130,000 households with incomes of more than $75,000 nevertheless received Social Security. But it wasn't all resentment. Longman talked seriously about The Future—what will happen to the country when, for instance, the $537 billion worth of pensions owed civil servants comes due.

"I think I was influenced by the environmental movement of the seventies," he says. "You had the ethos of stewardship of natural resources and that kind of led to thinking about the husbandry of *financial* resources. You can deplete aquifers, and you can deplete capital."

And his writings also had a strong theme of generational equity. It wasn't just the poor elderly

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who were getting a raw deal, it was the young. In a 1985 piece for *The Atlantic*, he argued for "justice between generations," and he looked at how the regressive Social Security tax was hurting younger, poorer workers. The tone was deliberate but civil. "We don't go in for a lot of table pounding," says William Whitworth, editor of *The Atlantic*.

That was my experience with Longman, too, having both edited and read him. He hasn't gotten facts wrong, which is a joy. Less pleasurable were attempts to wrest him away from such demagogic statements as this one from page 207 of his book:

"While these and other accrual-based estimates of the government's fiscal position remain controversial, in part because of the uncertain assumptions about the future that necessarily underlie them, there is a strong and growing consensus among fiscal policy experts that the government's current method of keeping its books is simply inadequate to the reality it faces."

Honey, did you hear that? What's Buddy MacKay's phone number!?!

"That guy"

By 1985, Longman had a new byline: Washington writer. He moved to Washington, D.C. from the Princeton offices of the *New Jersey Monthly* not only to write, but shape policy. (He worked up a huge Amtrak bill visiting his wife, Robin, who remained in New Jersey.) Senator Dave Durenberger, a Minnesota Republican, had asked him to be the research director for his new think-tank/lobby, Americans for Generational Equity (AGE). This was a hotbed of Longmanism as the group whipped out papers on topics like entitlement reform and deficit reduction.

After two years, though, Longman realized that elderly politics was hardball politics. Durenberger's open-minded approach to entitlements like Social Security was bringing the senator heat. "Durenberger Link to Controversial Group Threatens His Reelection Bid," read a report in the *National Journal*. The *St. Paul Pioneer Press Dispatch*: "Durenberger's Baby Boomer Group Stirs Controversy." This year, the flame is being turned up by, of all people, Hubert Humphrey III, who's running against Durenberger. Addressing a senior citizen's group, Humphrey charged of AGE: "Those who would preach the gospel of young against old and dawn against darkness are misjudging you and your children and your children's children." The Happy Warrior hasn't gone after Longman directly, but, in a conversation I had with his press secretary Karen Chandler, she kept referring to "that guy with the Yuppie lobby." After two years at AGE and with reports continuing to circulate in the *National Journal* that Longman's views were an embarrassment, he quit. An aide to Durenberger told the *Press Dispatch* that he "got rid of Longman."

But last fall, redemption seemed on the horizon. Longman took a job with a congressman who, like Durenberger, dared to be different. More so. Buddy MacKay wasn't your power suit and empty mind. As a freshman, he screwed up the courage, along with Tim Penny, a Minnesota Democrat, to argue that Social Security cost of living allowances (COLAs) be considered for a budget freeze. (Just what Florida wants to hear.) And he bucked his state's delegation in 1986 when all its members but he cast votes for contra aid. Again, this courted no capital with the state's Dixiecrats, not to mention the Cubans. What's more, MacKay took on liberal shibboleths. As a bill to increase the minimum wage was gathering momentum this spring, MacKay opposed it in an editorial in *The Washington Post* (written by Longman). This wasn't some Chamber of Commerce screed. It made the case for an innovative tax credit for the working poor. Since fewer than one out of five of those who make the minimum wage are poor heads of households, a raise would wind up subsidizing all those teenagers more likely to use the money "to put gas in the Camaro than food on the table," MacKay (via Longman) argued. But when it came to entitlements, dissent was just too costly. That a MacKay can be browbeaten into dismissing Longman says a lot about the state of political dialogue in the country.

Mad Mel

How could anyone get so worked up about Phillip Longman? I had a glimmer of that when I called Key West and spoke to Mel Levitt, who had appeared on the "West 57th Street" broadcast opposite Longman and had came off like a parody of South Florida's elderly—comfortable, contented, bitter. "The elderly person is not a burden to his country," Levitt told the audience, with his thin face and white moustache bobbing. "And if he is, he is entitled to be a burden." On the phone, however, he came off as an infectiously likable guy who kept calling me "Brother." It's easy to see why he takes entitlements seriously. He rose through New York City public schools. He worked to get into Stuyvesant, the city's top high school. He served in the Pacific during World War II. And like a lot of Americans he has given as good as he's gotten, building a business in Key West and serving on the board of the Florida Keys Memorial Hospital and the Key West Chamber of Commerce.

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What's more, old age, even with this kind of comfort, has been no picnic. He talks not about golf but about his mother-in-law who died after massive strokes, and only after tortuous years in which Mel took care of her. "She defecated and urinated and couldn't swallow," Levitt says, describing how she had to be lifted and rotated in bed to prevent sores. Levitt visited others too, working on local hospital boards and listening to the sick. "Hate the food. Hate the food," they would tell him.

If the question was tax reform or environmental policy or antisatellite weapons, you could probably bring people like Mel Levitt and Phillip Longman together to settle their differences reasonably and calmly. But, as Phillip Longman has learned, entitlements are about more than money. Their currency is measured not only in Senate authorization bills and continuing resolutions; for millions, these programs have become synonomous with gratitude. When cuts are threatened, seniors cringe not only to protect their cash but because they see society flinching on a moral bargain. You could see that on "West 57th Street." When Levitt was asked whether he "needed" his Social Security check, he got upset. That was, of course, the right question. Common sense dictates that we help those most in need. But in his reaction, in that moment between him and Steve Kroft, the beefy and prosperous young reporter you could see Levitt wince. The question was taken as an insult, a withdrawal of the respect that the elderly desire and deserve. "I felt like asking him," Levitt says, "Do you need the money?" If we're going to wean the comfortable elderly from entitlements it won't come from calling them greedy geezers but from reasoning with them.

But there aren't many people willing to lower their voices about entitlements. After the stock market crash in October, as Congress rushed into an emergency summit meeting on the budget, there seemed to be, finally, a moment of repose to consider this day our daily debt. But the National Committee for the Preservation of Social Security dropped a quick note to its 4.5 million members telling them to fight cuts in Social Security. AARP officials were a little more reserved, saying officially that they would not rule out Social Security changes to reduce the deficit if the sacrifices were widespread. But, as *Congressional Quarterly* reported, the legislative director for AARP said that such cuts would be feasible only in a much more ambitious package than the ones being offered. The result: Social Security changes didn't even get serious consideration at a moment of true national crisis. We keep sidestepping it, hoping that guys like Phillip Longman just go away. □

THE WASHINGTON MONTHLY

Journalism Award

for March 1988 is presented to

Morton Mintz
The Washington Post

Most journalists cover months-long trials only for glamorous stuff, like arms diversions or sex crimes. But Morton Mintz has been holed up in a Newark, New Jersey courtroom since January, covering an arcane trial of tremendous importance. It's a liability suit that charges three cigarette manufacturers—Philip Morris, Lorillard, and the Liggett Group—with conspiring to conceal the dangers of tobacco. The suit could open a floodgate of claims holding tobacco companies financially responsible for the estimated 350,000 cigarette-related deaths each year. Mintz has again shown the passion and skill that have made him journalism's leading guardian of the health of the American people and one of its most effective exposers of corporate immorality.

The Monthly Journalism Award is presented each month to the best newspaper, magazine, television, or radio story (or series of stories) on our political system. Nominations for any newspaper, magazine, or radio or television station in the country are welcome. The subject can be government in its federal, state, or municipal manifestation.

The award for stories published or aired in April will be announced in the July/August issue. Nominations for stories published or aired in May and June will close July 15. The winner will be announced in the September issue. Two copies of the article or broadcast text should accompany the nomination.

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Don't Give Up: Poverty Programs That Work

Selling salsa, banking in the ghetto, and 11 other strategies for helping the poor

Here come those acronyms again, you may be thinking, JTPA, CETA, and all the rest. There's reason to be skeptical when anyone starts up about poverty programs that work. Let's face it—most don't.

Historically, the poverty programs that have worked best have gone by different names, like good schools, a strong labor movement, and Social Security. Good schools are always good poverty programs, but they've become increasingly rare over the past 20 years. Membership in a labor union can still offer a ticket out of poverty, but those high-paying jobs that require little education are getting as rare as good public schools. And by enforcing restrictive work and membership rules, most unions seem more interested in their own than in reaching out to their poor nonmembers.

Of course the story of much of American history is the story of the best poverty program of all: economic growth. A strong economy remains an essential antipoverty weapon. But economic growth won't do the job alone, particularly for the mostly black underclass, whose rise in the past 20 years has presented a more intractable form of American poverty. The gulf between middle-class society, black or white, and the black underclass extends beyond economics, to values, aspirations, and behavior. It is measured in record numbers of pregnant teens, female-headed families, drug addiction, and violence, a collective social disintegration that did not exist in the ghettos of earlier generations and that responds much less readily to economic opportunity.

The programs below offer some unusual suggestions for the poor, from selling salsa to sneaking people into suburbs. Some of the ideas are addressed toward the problems of the black underclass, while others offer solutions more workable for less severe forms of disadvantage. They've been chosen by people trained to cast a skeptical eye on poverty promises, and their success is of a modest variety—experimental, limited, and local. In some instances, their success may consist only of failing less stupendously than similar efforts elsewhere.

While triumphs of this kind might not be ones we can savor, neither are they ones we can ignore. In considering them, it's important to think beyond the programs to the *principles* that work.

Among the ones we've spotted:

The 20 Minute Bus Ride Test. Most poverty programs can't help everyone, and even the best ones usually can't help people with no desire to help themselves. Jobs for Youth, a Chicago program that places about a thousand poor black teenagers in summer jobs each year has found a way to make sure its efforts reach the people who can benefit: applicants have to be willing to come to the business district to sign up. It's an appropriately modest challenge. Ghetto kids don't have to be rocket scientists to catch a bus downtown. But they do have to have at least the minimal motivation that makes their prospects of success feasible.

The Money Back Guarantee. Most underclass kids grow up with the idea that the only thing guaranteed is failure, a belief held so deeply that it mocks all effort. When technology tycoon Gene Lang blurted out a promise to send the kids in his old Harlem grammar school to college, he found a way to reverse the psychology of defeat: offer a sure thing. If the kids did their part, they'd be rewarded. He proved his sincerity by staying in touch with the kids, bringing them to his office and to shows in New York. The certainty of his promise unlocked a torrent of dormant ambition.

For most middle-class kids, the idea that hard work leads to reward is taken at face value. (Its truth in generations of practice is probably the thing that has most distinguished America from other societies.) But for underclass kids, surrounded by generations of dependency and defeat, The Money

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photo by Donna Binder, Impact Visuals

Back Guarantee proved revolutionary.

After an interlude of shoulder-shrugging disillusion, the country seems ready to begin confronting the problems of the poor again. The problems we face, particularly those of the black underclass, are rooted in several centuries of American experience. (That's why, of course, it's so important to keep fighting racial and sexual discrimination.) They won't dissolve with a Jobs Club here and a training program there. But the Jobs Clubs and the training programs and the computerized literacy plans and the small business incubators and the preschool programs and the community colleges that we describe do make differences in individual lives.

For all the plentiful despair of the ghetto, the number of people willing to sign up at training centers and adult education courses across the country shows a persistence of desire. Even the drug and prostitution trades that flourish in the ghetto show a pool of organizational—even entrepreneurial—talent waiting to be tapped. A final poverty principle: Don't give up.

—The Editors

Give the 20-Minute Bus Ride Test

by Nicholas Lemann

The idea behind Jobs for Youth/Chicago is extremely, almost off-puttingly, simple: it finds private-sector jobs for kids from poor families. The kids must be between the ages of 16 and 21, and their families' incomes must fall below the poverty line; practically speaking, this means that most of them come from welfare families in Chicago's black ghetto, which is the biggest in the country. Jobs for Youth, which is ten years old and funded mostly by the Labor Department (there are two loosely affiliated, and older, offices in New York and Boston), places about a thousand kids a year in jobs, and more than 90 percent hold on to them for at least three months. If they stay on the job for six months, Jobs for Youth will help them get a better job—having an employment history is the key

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to getting a job with a future. Fighting poverty is supposed to be more complicated than this.

The first reason Jobs for Youth works is that its participants are self-selected. Most of them have heard of the program through word of mouth, and all of them have to be motivated enough to come to the Loop and sign up. It's easier to find jobs for people who have made a commitment to getting jobs.

Second, Jobs for Youth puts its participants through a three-week pre-employment training workshop (usually taught by a volunteer who works in business) before sending them to real employers. One of the great lessons of the past 20 years about jobs programs for poor teenagers is that they work much better if there's a buffer zone between the streets and the workplace. Job training is really a short course in acculturation for people who, first of all, are not at life's zenith of self-discipline simply by virtue of being adolescents, and, second, being from welfare families, haven't spent their lives around people who work; the course at Jobs for Youth heavily emphasizes punctuality (the kids even have to punch a time clock when they arrive at the office) and grooming, in addition to explaining how to deal with employers.

Third, in Chicago (as in most big cities), the private job market, while it may be bad for steelworkers, is quite good for unskilled teenagers. Employers, on the one hand, badly need entry-level employees, but on the other hand are often automatically suspicious of black teenagers, especially boys. Having proved to employers over the years that its kids do well at work, Jobs for Youth in effect provides its graduates with a passport to the larger economy—it says to employers, you can feel confident that the people from our program are honest and reliable, and knowing this helps get employers over whatever racial barriers may exist in their minds.

You often hear that many ghetto kids don't get jobs because the jobs are too far away, and because, if all that's available is flipping burgers at McDonald's for the minimum wage, what's the use? The experience of Jobs for Youth shows that, in Chicago at least, there are jobs within reasonable commuting distance of the ghettos (especially in the Loop and at O'Hare Airport), and that there is more to the world of entry-level employment than fast food. Over the past nine months, Jobs for Youth has placed only 30 kids in fast-food jobs—the bigger categories are messengers in law firms and brokerage houses, baggage handlers at the airport, and clerks in banks, and all of these start at above the minimum wage. Even fast-food jobs are appealing to kids if it looks like they'll lead to something better, which is an idea Jobs for Youth stresses heavily and can prove through its own participants' experience. Jobs for Youth also has a six-month program preparing dropouts for the high-school equivalency exam, and this can lead to college and eventually to a profession.

In the job-training business, there is a constant temptation (created in part by the hostility of labor unions to efforts to get real jobs for poor kids) to fall into a gauzy romanticism. As a result, much effort has been wasted on creating non-jobs "in the community" (this was CETA's problem—I once visited a CETA program in a housing project where the job being created was "watching cars") and on Teddy Roosevelt-style character-building exercises in which kids are taught how to rock-climb or play tennis instead of how to fill out forms. Fostering group spirit is effective but not as an end in itself. In jobs programs it works only in conjunction with getting poor kids out of the ghetto and into real jobs and providing them with whatever instruction and emotional and practical support they need to make that considerable leap. □

Nicholas Lemann, national correspondent for The Atlantic, *is a contributing editor of* The Washington Monthly.

Borrow the Businessmen

by Erik Payne Butler

For the past two years, Career Beginnings has served more than five thousand young people in 22 U.S. cities. Who are they? We call them "tenacious" youth. Their "tenacity" has overcome poverty (75 percent are officially poor), lousy urban schools (all are from cities over 100,000), and race (65 percent are black, 18 percent Hispanic, 8 percent Asian). They are neither in the top 20 percent nor the lowest 20 percent of their class. These "middle" young people, by and large, get overlooked.

The program is run from the campuses of 25 different colleges, ranging from Columbia to Rancho Santiago College in Orange County, California. A modest bit of self-selection occurs: interested students apply within their high schools, which refer the most appropriate applicants to the nearby college.

The program begins midway through the students' junior year and continues for two years. Career Beginnings provides remedial education when needed, and most often it is—students average two grades behind in math and reading. It offers college and career preparation and a quality summer job

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(often through the Job Training Partnership Act and sometimes through local business groups).

Part of its secret is the group support it provides. The disadvantaged kids in the program bond as a class. They receive newsletters and design their own program T-shirts. They feel singled out and special, many for the first time in their lives.

But most important, the program offers each youngster a personal mentor, usually recruited through the local business or college community. At the University of Minnesota, mentors include Minneapolis Mayor Don Fraser. The one-on-one relationship is crucial. Mentors meet with students at least once a month and stay in touch in between. They discuss work and working, assist with college applications, and help students prepare for life after high school. The best mentors act as guides, counselors, teachers, and adjunct family—not simply role models but real friends to one young person.

How well does it work? In our first class of 2,300, more than 95 percent graduated from high school and completed Career Beginnings, and more than 60 percent enrolled in college. In a recent survey 95 percent were still enrolled in college. Our best estimates suggest that similar students not in the program would enroll in college at a rate closer to one in three, while Career Beginnings students enroll at a rate of nearly two in three.

The program began in the spring of 1986 in 24 colleges, with support from a consortium of foundations. It is managed by the Center for Human Resources at Brandeis University.

What's more, it's cheap. Not including summer wages, the average cost of the two-year program is just $1,500 per student. □

Erik Payne Butler is director of the Center for Human Resources at Brandeis University.

Give Them a Guarantee

by Myron Magnet

How hollow these platitudes must sound, thought Eugene Lang as he looked down from the podium of his old east Harlem grammar school at the 61 black and Hispanic sixth graders listening to his graduation address in 1981. You need to have a dream, he exhorted. You must go to college to achieve it. Fat chance, they must be thinking. After all, in this neighborhood around three-quarters of the students don't graduate from high school, and almost no one goes to college.

You *can* go, he told them; and on the spur of the moment the millionaire technology entrepreneur made them a promise that hadn't even entered his mind when he first walked on the stage. Finish high school, he said; get into college, and I promise I'll give you scholarships. After a moment of stunned silence, pandemonium erupted, with bewildered mothers calling out in Spanish from the back of the auditorium: What did he say?

Now, seven years later, almost three-quarters of the students have gotten their high school diplomas, and Lang expects that ultimately 90 percent will graduate. More than half the kids are now college freshmen, and a third of those undergrads are in private institutions—including Barnard, Rensselaer Polytech, and Swarthmore. By September, two-thirds will be enrolled. When the last of the students walks up to get his diploma, probably in 1992, Lang will have spent more than $200,000 keeping his promise—around $350 per kid, per year. This isn't a huge expenditure. But money wasn't what primarily worked this success.

The story of Lang's gift has been told often, but the lesson it illustrates can't be stressed enough. He provided students and their families with a guarantee that if they did the right thing, they would be rewarded for it. That certainty—that hard work would pay off—may seem a precept of middle class life, but it was radically new to ghetto kids who mature with the expectation of failure.

Lang's object was to restore these children to full membership in the larger community and the larger culture. "It's important that they grow up to recognize that they are not perpetuating the life of the pariah," he says, "but that the resources of the total community are legitimately theirs to take advantage of and contribute to and be a part of." Lang took them to restaurants, the opera, the theater. He hired a full-time social worker to watch over them, to help them sort out problems with school, to keep them together as a group that gave them all a feeling of being special.

He restored them to membership in the larger community—both by showing them that what society offers could be theirs, too, and by encouraging them to let the larger community's standards take hold. He didn't do this by overt preaching. "By letting my own life speak the way it speaks, it does have a good quality of persuasion," he says. He had them visit his midtown Manhattan office on Saturdays to talk to them about what you have to do to win success like his.

The lesson took. After a men's clothing manufacturer offered to donate four suits to Lang's program as prizes to the most outstanding boys, the four winners arrived at a meeting of all the kids in the suits

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they had chosen. "I looked for the bright colors, the signs of youth," Lang says, "and here these four boys came in, each wearing blue or charcoal pinstripes, as though they were walking out of the training program at Morgan Stanley. I can't tell you how good I felt, because one could see what had happened *inside* these youngsters." While "gray flannel" was once a handy catch phrase for anyone who wanted to denounce "conformity," it was anything but that for these kids. They were rejecting a culture of defeat and embracing a world of new opportunity.

Lang's graduates show how much can be accomplished with underclass kids even starting as relatively late as junior high school. They show too how money alone can't provide what underclass kids need, since their disadvantage is at least as much cultural as it is economic. Lang taught these kids that there really is an American dream worth having and that it really can be theirs if they work for it. The kids can take it from there. □

Myron Magnet is on the board of editors of Fortune *magazine.*

Be a Nudge

by Michael Bernick

When Gloria Bestwick enrolled in the San Francisco Renaissance business machine technician training, she was determined to build a career. At 28, she was on AFDC with no job in the past year and no history of steady work. But even after completing the 14-week training, her search for a job was difficult. At Xerox, which actively seeks minority women as technicians, she failed the qualifying exam. At Bell and Howell, another strong affirmative action employer, she needed a car that she did not have. At four other office machine companies, she was passed over for other technicians who had at least two years of experience.

After these disappointments, she kept going to job interviews, pushed on by Don Green, the director of Renaissance's vocational training. Green continued to arrange interviews, even driving her himself. He followed up with calls to the employers. Finally, after 12 applications, she landed a part-time job with Kennedy Business Machines. The next year, she moved into a full-time position.

Bestwick's job search shows what makes Don Green and Renaissance effective. Green, 35, has been director of Renaissance's vocational training since 1982, coming to Renaissance after a frustrating series of jobs in the juvenile justice system ("as a counselor, which means mainly babysitter"). Wanting to teach inner-city youths to be more than simply secretaries, Don has developed classes that teach them to repair microcomputers, office machines, and telecommunications equipment. Over the past five years, his classes have trained hundreds of San Franciscans, and most of the computer stores and office machine repair companies in the Bay area employ at least one graduate.

"By far the most important factor in training is contacts with employers," Green says, and he spends perhaps 30 percent of each week either calling local employers—Xerox, Royal, Savin, Taylor-Made, Computerland—or visiting them to stay on top of who is hiring and what skills they're looking for. Since 1982 he has developed the contacts and credibility that enable him to sell his product: job trainees. "I never forget I'm selling a product, and need to emphasize the customer's needs, rather than the social impact," he says.

Occasionally, the transition is smooth; but more often it is a matter of arranging many interviews, calling employers after interviews ("to show employers that our people really want the jobs"), and offering assistance to employers after placement. "It's important to us to know that we can call Don if the Renaissance graduate begins to come late or screw up," the head of a franchise computer store explains, "though often Don will take the initiative to call us and check on things."

Don also must hustle to keep trainees in class during the 14-week training. One day, someone will want to drop out to take a $4-an-hour job at Church's Fried Chicken; another day someone will be discouraged by the math skills required and decide to leave. Someone else will be threatened with eviction from an apartment, or have a fight with a girlfriend or boyfriend. Don goes to their houses and families, to convince them that it's worth hanging in for three and a half months.

Hundreds of papers are written each year seeking to identify the elements of successful job training. But these elements are not complex—strong ties with employers, a curriculum geared toward demand, motivated students, and most of all a dogged persistence in helping them contact employer after employer in finding work. The bigger challenge is how to attract and retain more persons like Don Green—"Mr. Jobs" as he is known in the Bayview, Mission, and Western Addition. □

Michael Bernick, a San Francisco attorney, is the founder and former executive director of the San Francisco Renaissance Center.

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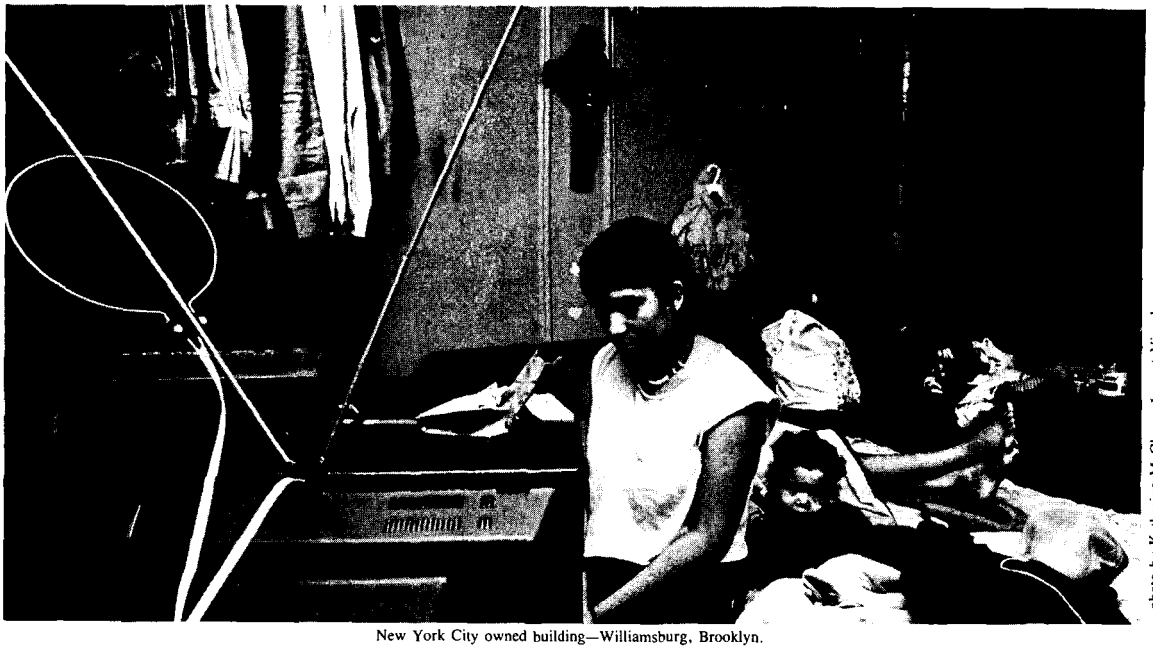

photo by Katherine McGlynn, Impact Visuals

New York City owned building—Williamsburg, Brooklyn.

Forget the Beautician Schools

by Wade Rathke

There is hardly more compelling proof of the desire of lower-income Americans to work than their willingness to participate in the hoax of job-training programs. Unemployed men and women swamp electronics schools, community colleges, vo-tech programs, computer schools, JTPA programs, and lots of other places in the search of the American Dream. There are many fine training programs; often even bad training programs teach some new skills. But the training programs do not work, because they never get wanna-be workers any closer to a J-O-B.

Virtually any study of national trends on job creation lists janitors as the fastest growing job category through 1990. Name one private, state, local, or federal training program that specializes in training men and women to be janitors? We know of none. In New York a janitor will make between $12 and $14 per hour. The same is true in San Francisco, Chicago, and some other markets, usually where the industry is heavily unionized.

The formula for job-training success is simple: connecting real jobs to real unemployed workers. Training programs are much more successful in the delivery of jobs to the trainers than to the trainees. In Little Rock in the early 70s, we would see 300 welfare recipients a year come out of federally funded programs as qualified beauticians in order to supply a market where fewer than 10 new jobs a year were expected. Twenty years ago with welfare rights, we used to say that all welfare recipients needed was more money. The unemployed simply need more jobs.

But we have seen some teasers that hold promise if more widely pursued:

►**First Source Agreements**: In 1985, ACORN (The Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now) was able to convince a number of cities, including Des Moines, Washington, D.C., and Miami, to enact "first-source" agreements. These required employers benefiting from public funds for development projects to hire CETA-eligible unemployed workers before any others and to train them in entry level jobs.

►**Developer Agreements**: ACORN was sometimes able to convince developers to sign first-source agreements promising to hire from the affected communities. The Rouse Corporation in Miami and New Orleans agreed, as did the Marriott Corporation in Atlanta and Columbia, South Carolina. The companies delivered jobs and training, and ACORN delivered the qualified, unemployed workers. Simple but effective.

The best program was the Trammel Crow development in the Little Mexico area of Dallas in the early 80s, when Crow and ACORN negotiated quotas

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both on construction jobs to build developments and on retail jobs in the stores that followed. Similar agreements in Pittsburgh, Chicago, and elsewhere were as good on paper but failed when the developer failed to secure financing and the project itself did not take off. There, inevitably, lies the risk of hiring agreements with developers. □

Wade Rathke is chief organizer and founder of ACORN and Local 100 of the Service Employees International Union, both headquartered in New Orleans.

Let Them Eat Software

by Sar A. Levitan

Millions of people experience difficulties in finding and holding jobs because they have not mastered the three Rs. An anecdote will illustrate what I mean. A supervisor at a midwestern manufacturing firm directed a young worker to fetch a two-and-a-half-foot piece of copper tubing from the supply room next door. The youngster took 15 minutes to return empty-handed, explaining that he could find only 18-inch and 30-inch tubes. Similar incidents are repeated millions of times every day in the American workplace. According to the Census Bureau, some 20 million adult Americans are functional illiterates. What can we do?

Modern technology has made it possible to offer basic skills instruction efficiently and effectively. An outstanding example is the Comprehensive Competencies Program (CCP) developed under a grant from the Ford Foundation by the nonprofit Remediation and Training Institution. RTI distributes its program through franchises administered by its subsidiary, the United States Basics Skills Investment Corporation.

The program is perhaps best described as a high-tech equivalent of the one-room schoolhouse. The computer asks a question: How many inches in three feet? If the student gives the wrong answer, the computer says try again. If wrong answers continue, the computer supplies the information. The lesson takes place in private. Gone are the inhibitions and embarrassments that often drive students from the classroom.

To qualify for a CCP franchise, an organization (a school, say, or government agency) has to submit a plan indicating who is to be served, break down anticipated costs, and outline available funding. The applying organization also has to report periodically on the achievement of enrollees, allowing U.S. Basics to keep stringent quality control. Some 25 thousand persons are enrolled in 270 learning centers located in 38 states, the District of Columbia, and Canada. More than half of the centers are supported by the federal Job Training Partnership Act. Another 20 percent are located in public schools.

At the latest count, at least half of the learners have averaged one grade improved in reading in 22 hours of instruction and 1.4 grades in math in 28 hours of instruction. The cost? Ten dollars per hour of instruction.

It's one of the few certainties in life that increased educational achievement means higher earnings, reduced dependency, a decline in incarceration, and a decline in out-of-wedlock births. Based on such data, RTI estimates that for every dollar spent in a CCP learning center, the taxpayer receives five dollars in benefits. That may be self-promotion, but the program works. □

Sar A. Levitan is the director of the Center for Social Policy Studies at George Washington University.

Find a Starry-Eyed Psychologist

by Jodie T. Allen

When I joined the Carter administration in the summer of 1977, my expectations were modest. The new president had run on a platform that called for putting more welfare recipients to work, but at no new cost to the government. No one in either the Labor Department, where I worked, or the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, took the zero cost requirement very seriously.

But we at Labor saw Carter's welfare reform as a chance to redirect CETA's massive system of public service employment away from being a quick fix for the recession toward playing a more permanent role in helping the chronically unemployed. Our idea was to attack poverty by providing work, rather than welfare. We knew enough about job programs not to make the usual rosy predictions about converting "tax-eaters to taxpayers." We didn't even assume participants would move from our public jobs into private ones any faster, but in the meantime at least they'd be working for their income.

This honesty turned out to be lousy strategy. One reason is that Congress *likes* to be courted with inflated predictions of welfare dollars saved and lives transformed. But it also turned out that our skepticism was not fully justified.

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photo by Kathleen Foster, Impact Visuals

Housing project—Harlem, New York.

One of the features of our job program called for an eight-week "waiting period" before a recipient could claim a job. The purpose was to prevent unemployed people who would otherwise find a regular job in a few weeks from using up one of our expensive subsidized jobs instead. The waiting period was very unpopular among the administration's liberal supporters, who regarded it as heartless. (Never mind that waiting didn't make anyone worse off than he currently was without any job program at all.) At least we should give them some help in looking for a job and maybe get them a bit more ready.

I was not thrilled by the idea of allocating scarce money to more of the same old job preparation assistance that had done so little in the past. So I was dubious when my staff brought in a starry-eyed psychologist named Nathan Azrin, who said he had invented something called a "Job Club," which would find unsubsidized jobs for two out of three of our welfare clients in a matter of weeks. Still, we needed something, and the price was right—which is to say cheap.

The next thing I knew the damn things worked. Like gangbusters. Up in Lowell, Massachusetts, where the electronics industry was just starting to boom, Azrin's club was siphoning off 90 percent of participants into stores and factories before our subsidized job placers even got a crack at them. Even in rural Missouri more than three out of five were finding jobs in short order.

I visited one of these miracles to find out how the Job Club did it. One key ingredient was a meticulously trained, highly enthusiastic staff. Another was that welfare clients had to take the initiative in finding the job. In traditional programs, professional manpower specialists would pronounce the client either "job ready," in need of further training or other aid, or a hopeless cause to be returned to the welfare rolls. The Job Club approach left the "job-readiness" decision to the labor market.

Participating in the program was obligatory for many Job Club clients, a feature that many felt was helpful in overcoming long-term shyness about approaching employers. (Although the really tough cases—adults with chronic drug, alcohol, physical, or behavioral problems, of which there are many—didn't come to the program at all.) Most clients were anxious to test the waters.

Job Club trainers, working primarily with small groups, taught their clients to search their pasts and remember experiences that might be salable—a part-time job after school, a school subject or sport done well, success in organizing school or volunteer activities, help provided to neighborhood kids—and to begin feeling self-reliant. Sounds corny but it worked.

An even more striking departure from accepted practice was the Job Club method for finding jobs. In the traditional model, "job-development specialists" typically put in a call to one of the handful of firms they have scored some success with in the past

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and ask if they can send over a welfare recipient who might work out. The Job Club approach focused instead on teaching clients how to find a job for themselves: how to use a phone book to find likely employers, large and small; how to follow up, and so on. Then participants set to work with a bank of phones—making calls, following up on leads, going out to interviews, coming back and reporting to their fellow job-seekers.

The genius of this approach lies in the fact that sending a job-seeker out with a label reading "hire me I'm on welfare" is a sure turnoff for employers. Studies have shown that it's a turnoff so complete that even bribing employers with tax credits or bounties can rarely overcome it.

No doubt the pilot projects' success rate would have fallen as caseloads grew and job openings grew scarcer. But even at half the rate, the success would have been phenomenal for this clientele. The Reagan administration threw out the pilot projects along with the rest of CETA, but some Job Clubs still exist. Perhaps with the growing interest in rescuing welfare recipients from dependency, the Job Clubs will have a chance to make a more lasting contribution to this effort. □

Jodie T. Allen is deputy editor of The Washington Post*'s Sunday Outlook section.*

Sell More Salsa

by Roger J. Vaughan

Two sisters in St. Paul, Minnesota, had little income but a valuable asset—a prized family recipe for salsa. But a bank denied their application for a $10,000 loan to go into business. The sisters were referred to the Women's Economic Development Corporation. With WEDCO's help and hard work, the sisters prepared a more realistic plan, returned to the bank, and received a loan nearly twice the size of their original request. Today they are shipping more than a half-million dollars worth of salsa each year.

WEDCO is a nonprofit corporation in St. Paul that assists women entrepreneurs. In the four years since its doors opened, 3,500 women have been helped, 644 new businesses created, and 400 existing businesses have been expanded, at a failure rate below 5 percent. Most striking, 67 percent of the women starting or expanding businesses had incomes below $15,000, and 63 percent were single heads of households.

WEDCO's businesses are diverse but heavily weighted toward retail and craft businesses. They also include a firm that leases space to occupational therapists, a book distributor, a custom upholsterer, a wood carver, and a pest control firm.

WEDCO is the brainchild of four women entrepreneurs convinced that women face special problems if they try to start businesses: a lack of the networks that men could draw on for advice, lower self-esteem, and little respect from bank loan officers. At the same time, the First Bank of Minneapolis realized the advantages of a place to refer loan applicants whose business plans had potential but needed work. Started with bank money and foundation grants, WEDCO today has a staff of ten and operates on a $490,000 annual budget. It covers about one-third of its expenses from earned revenues, which include fees charged to clients and the sale of "how to" workbooks.

WEDCO teaches would-be entrepreneurs every step from marketing and management to finance and self-confidence. It does not attempt to screen winners and losers because too many improbable ideas have proved successful—including a pet modeling agency! Instead, between visits, clients must complete homework assignments. This weeds out those who cannot convert a vague idea into a viable business plan.

WEDCO also offers two last-resort finance programs funded by banks and by foundations. In three years, 110 loans have been advanced, ranging from $350 to $20,000. Of the more than $700,000 loaned, only $10,000 is in default.

Although the secret of WEDCO's success is deceptively simple, it will probably prove extremely hard to clone. WEDCO is run by experienced and hard-working professionals and is directly accountable to its funding sources—private, for-profit banks and foundations. As investors in WEDCO's own loan funds and as board members, the banks weigh the success of the program more carefully than most state legislatures oversee state agencies. The track record of state and local loan programs that assist small and minority-owned businesses is bad enough to offer pause before rushing to subsidize a local version of WEDCO in the name of helping the poor.

Entrepreneurship is not a way for all able-bodied people to escape welfare. (It's not right for all middle-class people either.) But one displaced worker in eight who has found work over the past decade has done so by creating his own job. WEDCO has proved that entrepreneurship can work for poor women. □

Roger J. Vaughan is an economic consultant based in Portland, Maine.

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Use the Community Colleges

by Dale Russakoff

In 1983, unemployment had moved like a blight through Pittsburgh and surrounding Allegheny County. More than 95,000 men and women, or one in seven workers, had lost their jobs—not only steelworkers but also restaurant workers, policemen, janitors, secretaries, clerks, and skilled laborers whose tasks were tied to the health of steel. The sheer breadth of the problem spawned a collective consciousness that led to a remarkable job training effort on the five campuses of the Community College of Allegheny County.

In 1983 and 1984, more than 7,000 unemployed men and women enrolled in the college to train for a range of jobs, with their expenses paid by county, state, and federal governments. It was the largest project of its kind in the United States, and it has since been studied by observers from 37 countries. It was also one of the most successful. In each of the three follow-up surveys the college conducted, the most recent taken in April 1987, almost 80 percent of the participants had found new jobs and remained in them. Of those, 84 percent said their new jobs grew from the college training; only 16 percent said the jobs were similar to the ones they lost.

Each of these men and women had held a job before, but many had been out of work more than two years and had come to view themselves as hardcore unemployed in a region where an opening for a dishwasher at an all-night diner drew more than a dozen applicants. Some stayed a semester; some three years. They emerged as nurses, chefs, landscapers, and gardeners at downtown buildings, computer technicians and programmers, office clerks, and fast-food franchisers, most reflecting the shift to a service economy.

Compared to federal job-training administrators, county officials proved unusually flexible. Participants just needed to be county residents who, as of spring 1983, had been eligible for unemployment compensation within the past 18 months. To enroll, they simply had to apply to the college. By contrast, the federal Job Training Partnership program required more than a dozen kinds of documents, including income stubs going back six months, proof of family size, and other papers that few people have at the ready.

Perhaps most important was the county's decision to vest its effort in a community college. Many of these schools have become de facto vocational training centers, with courses closely keyed to the needs of the local economy. Faculty members, unlike their colleagues at most liberal arts colleges, are accustomed to dealing with the pragmatic concerns of diverse, largely adult student bodies. Another key feature was that the program was run by counselors, not job training "experts." Uncomfortable with the idea of economic forecasting, they resisted the temptation to direct workers into what seemed "hot" careers, such as robotics—in retrospect, a prescient move. Each student chose his or her own direction. Laid-off workers, in interviews, said this choice was an important step toward taking charge of their destiny, after feeling at the mercy of economic forces.

"We were dealing with very disillusioned people and we did not want to make promises we couldn't keep," said Barbara Parees, the college's head of educational services. "When they came in, we said: 'We do not have jobs. We are not offering you jobs. We are offering you a chance to become educated.'" □

Dale Russakoff is a reporter on the national staff of The Washington Post.

Start a Ghetto Bank

by David Osborne

The nation's best jobs program for the poor, in my opinion, is not a jobs program. It is not even a government program. It is a private development bank on Chicago's south side, called the Shorebank Corporation. It consists of a bank, a real estate development, a venture capital fund, and a community development corporation. It occupies neither the public sector nor the private sector, but a "third sector" in between. It is the flagship of a growing movement to apply entrepreneurial methods to our social problems.

The story begins in the late 1960s, when a young Chicago banker named Ron Grzywinski seized upon then-state treasurer Adlai Stevenson III's offer to deposit state funds in banks that loan to minority business people. Grzywinski, who then owned a small bank near the University of Chicago, recruited two black activists and a young woman fresh out of graduate school. With no background in banking, they outshined Chicago's major banks. Their success got them thinking about the potential impact an aggressive bank could have on a black ghetto. Grzywinski took a leave of absence, raised $800,000 from foundations and philanthropists, borrowed $2.4

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million more, and bought South Shore Bank.

As they groped for a successful strategy to turn South Shore around, it became clear that the key was rehabilitating the apartment buildings that housed 70 percent of the neighborhood's 80,000 people. When buildings are abandoned in a neighborhood like South Shore—as they were in rising numbers throughout the 70s—the empty hulks become targets for arson and hangouts for junkies. Crime skyrockets and law-abiding residents flee. Black neighborhoods all over Chicago's south side have been depopulated in precisely this way.

South Shore Bank set out to reverse the downward spiral by doing what no other financial institution in Chicago would do: giving mortgages on ghetto apartment buildings. By 1987 it had made more than $35 million in mortgage and rehab loans on more than 200 buildings—close to a quarter of all apartment buildings in South Shore. The impact was dramatic. There are still some pockets of decay, but, driving the tree-lined streets, one also sees elegant courtyard buildings that would fit well into the tonier north side neighborhoods.

Meanwhile, Shorebank's community development corporation has trained hundreds of residents for jobs, provided remedial education, created a small-business incubator to help new firms survive, and created a program to help neighborhood women (including welfare recipients) go into business for themselves. Shorebank's real estate firm recently broke ground on an eight-acre shopping center. In the process, thousands of people have found work. But more important, the community fabric now reinforces the work ethic.

This is one key to Shorebank's success: rather than attacking only one of the community's problems, it has attacked on a broad front. Shorebank's other secret is that it does not spend money, it *invests*. The typical government program, no matter how well intentioned, provides money or services to poor people simply because they are deserving. In contrast, Shorebank invests in people because it believes that they can succeed in the marketplace. If someone does not have that capacity—whether they want to start a business, buy a building, or simply get job training—Shorebank will not invest.

This is not a strategy that will work in every inner-city neighborhood. Some of our ghettos are too far gone. Nor is it an argument for expecting business to solve our social problems. There is simply not enough easy profit available in a community like South Shore for a traditional bank or developer. There must be some subsidy and there must be a commitment to more than the bottom line.

This is where government might come in—to provide some of this capital and inspire some of the talent. John Kennedy inspired a generation to enlist in the Peace Corps, VISTA, and the War on Poverty. The next president could do the same with an antipoverty strategy built on the third-sector model. □

David Osborne is the author of Laboratories of Democracy, *published this month by Harvard Business School Press.*

Peel the Bumperstickers

by Ken Auletta

One terrific antipoverty program I've encountered employs no teachers, counselors, or job-skill instructors. It doesn't perform miracles—like luring dropouts back to school, or helping to instill self-esteem, or training an ex-addict for the world of work. It isn't located in an inner-city slum. In fact, my favorite antipoverty effort—the Manpower Development Research Corporation—doesn't run poverty programs. It analyzes them.

Located on Manhattan's Park Avenue, the nonprofit, Ford Foundation-inspired MDRC specializes in information. No university, no government, has done more extensive studies of subsidized employment programs, of teen parenting efforts, or of workfare and welfare reforms. When the federal government shifted away from the hard-core underclass, MDRC entered into contracts with state and local governments and organizations to evaluate poverty programs.

The lessons their work imparts throb with the need to avoid the bumper-sticker cures for poverty. We are not dealing with one homogenized group of people whom we can label *poor* and for whom we can prescribe a single medicine. There are no elixirs, whether they come in the form of conservative bumper stickers that shout *individual responsibility*, or liberal bumper stickers that shout only *government responsibility*. Needed is a synthesis.

MDRC's twin approach to research couples hard numbers with very human case studies. The hard numbers guard against misleading anecdotal evidence. But the case studies guard against the sweeping generalizations of purely statistical approaches. Individuals in poverty have an assortment of problems that extend beyond mere lack of income and can include lack of literacy, self-confidence, and emotional support. We need to distinguish between the underclass and those who are only temporarily poor, between those with behavioral as opposed to

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just income woes. The nuanced approach of MDRC's research suggests the need for more customized antipoverty programs.

Of equal import, MDRC's respected analysis might unlock the secret to capturing the support of the American people. The public might gain confidence from the many success stories of the temporary poor that are often dwarfed by the more common failures of the more recalcitrant underclass. Perhaps they would gain new insight into how painfully difficult it sometimes is to reach the underclass. If we treat voters as if they have a consumer right to know what they're getting for their money, perhaps they will return the compliment in the form of greater patience and understanding. □

Ken Auletta, a columnist for the New York Daily News, *is the author of* The Underclass.

Airlift 'Em Out

by Nicholas Lemann

There are certain liberal ideas that we've all taught ourselves to believe can't possibly work, and one of these is the idea of government agencies moving poor black families from the inner-city ghettos to the mostly white suburbs, where the schools are better, the streets safer, and, these days, the jobs more plentiful. Just mentioning it brings visions of rocks thrown through windows and kids tormented by their classmates. But there is such a program in Chicago, and it has moved 3,500 families from ghetto public housing projects into suburbs since 1976, with considerable success. It is so popular that it gets 2,000 applicants in an annual one-day signup period. Relatively few of the families moved have experienced harassment, many who were unemployed in the city have found jobs in the suburbs, and in surveys the overwhelming majority say they are much happier with their kids' schools now than they were in the city.

The program was begun in 1976 by the Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities, an organization founded (as part of a 1966 peace treaty between Martin Luther King and Mayor Richard Daley) to promote residential desegregation. The Gautreaux Program is named for a woman who sued the Chicago Housing Authority for operating segregated housing and won; the Leadership Council runs it as part of the settlement between the CHA and the plaintiffs. Only residents of segregated housing projects in Chicago (most of the housing projects in Chicago are segregated) are eligible for the program. The Leadership Council places them in other housing, mostly in the suburbs, and gets them HUD Section 8 rent subsidies to pay for it.

In Chicago, as elsewhere, there is a certain amount of resident pride to be found in every housing project. Even the infamous Cabrini-Green has residents who are ardently trying to keep it from being torn down the way the even more infamous Pruitt-Igoe was in St. Louis in the seventies. But the truth is that most people in housing projects desperately want to get out. In particular, the out-of-control gang crime makes them want to leave; in general, the poor inner-city neighborhoods where most housing projects are located have long since ceased functioning as real communities in the sense of being able to provide their residents with education, employment, and an institutional life. The way to move up in the ghetto is to move out of it.

One reason the Gautreaux Program works is that it's an unabashed practitioner of "creaming," which means helping only the most motivated and most together people. Creaming is politically incorrect, but it works. As a voluntary program, Gautreaux gets a self-selected group of applicants who are on the average better educated and more likely to be employed than most residents of housing projects. In choosing among the applicants, the program engages in practices that used to be part of the standard operating procedure of public housing projects but were dropped in most places in the sixties for being, again, politically incorrect: as the brochure for applicants says, "Only families with acceptable housekeeping habits, credit, rental, family and personal histories and those with the minimum resources for moving will be referred." Gautreaux even uses such appurtenances of the much-reviled "social worker mentality" as home visits. It takes extraordinary strength for a poor black single mother to move her kids into a middle-class white neighborhood far away from anyone she knows, where they will have to endure, if not racial taunts, at least a lot of funny looks.

On the suburban end, the program firmly lines up the cooperation of private landlords in advance, and, most important, it operates in quasi-secrecy. The landlords and the families moving out from the projects are under strict instructions not to tell anybody how they got there—they are just the new folks who happened to move into the apartment house, not people from subsidized housing projects in Chicago. □

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Aw, Never Mind

by Charles Murray

What you have generously offered me is a chance to say that while I think most of the programs failed, I'm not a fanatic, and to prove it, here are some successes. And I can't do it, because I cannot think of a single large program, state or federal, that I consider to be a meaningful success. I can think of some statistical successes, as in "the results of the regression analysis indicate a difference in annual earnings between the experimental and control group significant beyond the .01 level." But what I have in mind when I think of success (and you, too, I bet) goes something like this: "Ten years ago, we had a big jobs program. Last year we tracked down a couple of hundred kids who were in the program to see how they were doing, and it was really heartening. A lot of the kids have regular jobs, they're raising families, they're doing pretty well—not all of them, but a lot. Not nearly as many of the kids we couldn't take into the program are doing as well."

To my knowledge, no jobs program can meet that standard. Let me broaden that: not a single federal program to employ the chronically unemployed, rehabilitate juvenile delinquents, keep students from dropping out of school, make welfare mothers independent, or get drug addicts off drugs can demonstrate success in the kinds of terms I have just stated. What happens instead is that the hints of success that *can* be found in small demonstration programs are used to raise doomed hopes that the same results can be produced on a national scale. Let me give you two examples.

The first example is the highly publicized Perry Preschool Program for poor black preschoolers. It showed substantial results—it was a meaningful success. The theme of the publicity attending the program has been: Here's what can be done with preschoolers; therefore Head Start can make (or can be altered so that it makes) major inroads in the problems of disadvantaged youths. But that's not what the lesson of Perry Preschool really is. Some reasons:

It was a tiny program, consisting of 58 youngsters and a control group of 65 who weren't in the program. The student-faculty ratio was never greater than 6-to-1. The teachers were hand-picked, highly skilled, and motivated. They received extra training in the special curriculum adopted just for the program. In addition to classes, the program boasted an hour-and-a-half home visit to *each* mother *each* week. And on and on.

So now we want to say, "Let's make Head Start like Perry Preschool." How? I'm not talking about money; assume enough money. (Like the economist stuck at the bottom of the pit in the joke: First, we assume a ladder.) You've been around bureaucrats and program implementation for a long time. Do you seriously think you can implement anything *remotely* approaching that little jewel for a few million kids?

Was Perry Preschool a success? Yes. Can we take advantage of it on a national scale? The temptation to say yes is overwhelming; I am arguing that it is an illusion. The unfailing ability of large-scale federal programs to shoot themselves in the foot will mean that Head Start, as currently implemented, is about as good as we'll ever get, and that's not good enough.

Let me take Job Corps as the second example and try to make a different type of point. As you know, the quality of Jobs Corps centers has been all over the lot. Some have been embarrassments, some impressive. But we do know a fair amount about what makes a good Job Corps center. Those with the best records have a demanding work load, strict rules, and enforcement. (That is, they're run the way that public schools are supposed to be run.) Now: It's next January, Dukakis is president, and miraculously several billion dollars have been found for job training programs. He makes you the Job Corps Czar. Miraculously, you overcome all the difficulties of making all the new Job Corps centers conform to the best models. There remains a catch: the best Job Corps programs know how to train youths ready to accept the discipline and do the work. *No program, not even the best of the best, knows how to train youths who come to them without these assets.* And it is precisely youths without those assets who make up the underclass.

I see in the resurgence of optimism about jobs and training programs ("This time we'll do it right") a mismatch between what the underclass is and what people want it to be and a mismatch between the way that large-scale programs actually are implemented and the way each new generation of reformers thinks it can implement them. And I fear a backlash when these renewed expectations are disappointed.

Let's face it: I am an oddball on these issues. But I appreciate the way you keep giving me a chance to be reasonable. □

Charles Murray is the author of Losing Ground *and a fellow at the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research.*

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I Was A New York Snob

How the Dodgers, Don Quixote, and Allen Ginsberg saved me

by Charles Peters

I was discharged from the Army in January 1946 and immediately went to New York City to enter Columbia College. For the most part, this was a time during which I was fascinated and delighted by the discoveries of living in New York and attending Columbia. But it was also when I first experienced the snobbery that I have come to detest. The story of how I drifted into it helps explain why *The Washington Monthly* sees snobbery as the great enemy of the ideals of community and service that we hope to encourage. As for the rest of the story of New York life, and its happier allurements, I hope you find it entertaining. Living through it was just that, and more, for me.

While in the Army, I had read *Teacher in America* by Jacques Barzun, one of the luminaries of the Columbia faculty. Barzun's description of the college was seductive. It was not gigantic, like the university of which it was a part, but had only 1,750 students and small classes, averaging 20 students or so. More surprising, those small classes were taught, even at the freshman level, by the brightest stars of the faculty—people like Barzun and Lionel Trilling and Mark Van Doren—rather than by the graduate students my friends who went to other prominent universities often got stuck with.

As Barzun's book implied, teaching was important at Columbia. In the fall of 1946, for example, Trilling taught 11 hours a week. Today's average in the Ivy League is more like five hours. And, as Barzun explained, this teaching served an overall education objective, which was to make sure that every student was introduced to the basics of Western civilization. All students were required to take courses that introduced them to the major works of literature, art, and music as well as to the thought of the great philosophers, economists, and historians. Having leafed through the bulletins of other colleges, which listed a bewildering array of electives with no discernible purpose, I welcomed this deprivation of free choice.

As an intellectual experience, Columbia more than met my expectations. Most of the classes *were* small; most of the teachers *were* outstanding. But I had come to Columbia not just to be educated but to live the life of a New Yorker. I had access to that life because it was cheap. Even a student of modest means could enjoy the city. Tuition was $225 per term. A glass of beer cost a dime. The subway was only a nickel as 1946 began.

One snowy night in late January, I took the IRT from the Columbia stop at 116th and Broadway to Greenwich Village, getting off at Sheridan Square and buying a copy of the *Daily Worker*. I felt deliciously radical with my upturned coat collar and my scarf blowing in the wind. Later, in April and May, the same nickel would buy a ride on an open-topped double-decker bus that would take you down

Charles Peters is the editor of The Washington Monthly. *This article is adapted from his book,* Tilting at Windmills, *to be published this month by Addison-Wesley.* *© 1988 Charles Peters.*

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to Washington Square or up to the Cloisters—a perfect answer to those warm spring afternoons when you weren't going to get any studying done anyway. There were lots of inexpensive French and Italian restaurants, like Le Champlain, La Fleur de Lis, and Barbetta's, where dinner with a glass of wine could be had for less than three dollars.

Watching classic films in the theater at the Museum of Modern Art cost 40 cents. Eddie Condon's jazz concerts at Town Hall were little more than a dollar. You could spend an evening at clubs like Jimmy Ryan's or the Three Deuces on 52nd Street for only two dollars or so.

Theater, concert, opera, and ballet tickets could be had for less than two dollars if you didn't mind sitting at the top of the balcony, and I didn't mind at all. Betty Combs, a voice student and my first New York girlfriend, gave me a free introduction to *Der Rosenkavalier* and her other favorite operas. This did not take place at the Met but by listening to records in her teacher's studio apartment in a brownstone in the West Sixties, which he let us use Friday and Saturday nights. I liked the music, but my main interest was Betty. To be alone with a pretty girl in a brownstone apartment in New York, even though our behavior was relatively chaste, was, like buying the *Daily Worker* in Sheridan Square, very close to the heart of what I had hoped life in the city would be.

And of course there was the theater. In just my first term at Columbia, I saw Gertrude Lawrence in *Pygmalion*, the then-unknown Marlon Brando playing Marchbanks to Katherine Cornell's Candida, Paul Douglas and Judy Holliday in *Born Yesterday* (their first starring roles), and Ethel Merman in *Annie Get Your Gun*. The following season I saw the original production of Eugene O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh*, Lerner and Loewe's *Brigadoon*, and *The Importance of Being Earnest*, with John Gielgud as Worthing and Margaret Rutherford as Lady Bracknell.

The 1947-48 season brought the original production of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, with Marlon Brando playing Stanley Kowalski. I saw a Saturday matinee performance, and that evening I tried to play Brando with my date, who proceeded to walk indignantly out of my life.

The next year came *South Pacific*, *Kiss Me Kate*, and the original *Death of a Salesman*, with Lee J. Cobb as Willy Loman. Remember, all these shows opened in just the three and a half years when I was a student at Columbia College. I do not believe that there has been a comparable period of creativity in the history of American theater.

One of the most impressive things about Columbia in the late forties was the brainpower of its students. They were, for the most part, not from the social elite—Jason Epstein was the only person I knew who had gone to prep school. They were drawn largely from two groups. One was World War II veterans. Several of them were my friends: Bob Williams, who had endured the frightening disintegration of the 106th Division during the Battle of the Bulge; John Uhl and Don Kirchoffer, who had served in the Navy; and Ned Gatchell, who had been a bomber pilot and had flown those hair-raising daylight missions over Germany. I was 19 when I entered Columbia, but most of the other veterans were two to six years older and therefore more mature and much less likely to waste time than the average college student. They were tough competition.

Allen and Norman

Only a little less tough, however, was the next largest group of students, the bright high school graduates from New York City, like my friend Steve Marcus. Because there were so many applicants from the city, they were subjected to more demanding admission standards than the rest of us. Columbia had a Jewish quota then, which meant that if you were from New York *and* Jewish, you had to be even brighter to get in. To those of us who were their less diligent classroom competition, these New Yorkers seemed demonic in their devotion to academic excellence—they'd get off the subway at 8 a.m., go directly to the library in South Hall, and stay there, except for meals and classes, until it closed, studying every minute. Norman Podhoretz, who later became editor of *Commentary* and a leading neoconservative, was a member of this group.

I knew Podhoretz as someone who attended a class with me, not as a friend or even an acquaintance. The course we took together was in twentieth-century fiction, taught by Harrison Steeves. Since the lures of life in New York often left me less than prepared for the morning's discussion, I sat in the back of the room. Podhoretz sat in the front and was always prepared. He was constantly waving his hand, constantly talking, constantly trying to impress the professor.

The problem was that Podhoretz was a Jew from Brooklyn and Steeves was a snobbish old WASP with little patience for the upwardly mobile. However brilliant Podhoretz might be, Steeves would not give him the recognition he so avidly sought. Steeves bestowed his regard, instead, on one Donald Maher, a reserved young man with the right accent.

The juxtaposition of Podhoretz and Steeves was

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hilarious to those of us on the back benches. But our laughter did not reflect personal animosity (as Podhoretz suggests in his book, *Making It*). Indeed, most of us were grateful to him for deferring the dread moment when Steeves might ask, "Well, Mr. Peters, you haven't said much lately. Why don't you tell us what you think Proust is trying to say?"

Several of my other classmates later made their marks on the world. One who did, and who probably influenced me more than anyone, I met on an October afternoon in 1946. I was with about 20 other students in Trilling's Humanities 3 class, discussing William Blake's *Songs of Innocence*. I noticed that some of the most thoughtful observations were being made by a dark, slight young man who was sitting in that day.

When the class broke up, I wanted to ask him about some of the things he had said, and I spoke with him as we walked out of Hamilton Hall, around to 116th Street, and on to the Amsterdam Avenue bus stop. Apparently we were headed in the same direction, for, still talking, we boarded the same bus. The conversation continued until I reached my stop. "I get off here," I said. "So do I," he said. We walked from the bus stop to my apartment building at 200 West 92nd Street. "Well this is where I live," I said. "So do I," he said. It was time to introduce ourselves. His name was Allen Ginsberg. He lived on the second floor; I lived on the fourth.

Allen and I became friends. He opened up a new world for me, introducing me to people like Jack Kerouac and Neal Cassady, people who were much more open and much less careerist than the typical Columbia student of that time. Sometimes I thought they were crazy, but more often I found myself liking their unconventionality.

One of the most appealing aspects of their unconventionality was that they didn't push it. Once, at a party, Kerouac took me into a bedroom to show me pictures of Arab boys in various postures of sexual abandon. It was obvious that Jack thought they might stimulate certain thoughts in my mind. But when I asked him instead about an attractive girl in the front room, he cheerfully put away the pictures and told me, "She works for the United Press and is from Mt. Airy, North Carolina. I'll introduce you."

I liked Allen best. When you talked to him you knew he really heard what you were saying. The barriers of pride and self-image that inhibit real communication between people were so slight in Allen that he could strip them away instantly when you were trying to get through to him. In his gentleness and his indifference to material things, he was almost otherworldly. I may have idealized Allen and Jack and Neal—Jack and Neal, in particular, had tormented undercurrents in their lives that I was unaware of—but my idealized version provided what was, for me, an important alternative to the Podhoretzes and the veterans, who were all preparing to don gray flannel suits.

Dinner with Tiny

The reason I was living on 92nd Street was that toward the end of my first term I had decided I didn't like life in a dormitory. The rooms were tiny and institutional, and, worst of all, women were not permitted above the ground floor. So Bob Williams and I launched an apartment search that consumed most of our afternoons for several weeks. Apartments were as scarce in New York in the spring of 1946 as they are today. At building after building and office after office, the word was "no vacancy" or "fully rented." Finally, at a 94th Street realtor's, there was good news. The agent told us that a Mrs. Goldhurst had come in that morning saying she wanted to rent two rooms of her apartment: "Maybe you'll find a couple of law students from Columbia for me." I said I was a pre-law student and that we were both from Columbia.

"Well," said the agent, "she's a very charming lady. Around 45, I'd say. Lives alone. I think she said she and her husband have separated. Anyway, here's her office phone number. I'm sure the apartment is very nice."

I had visions of a forties version of Mrs. Robinson, mature but still attractive, lonely, and lusting in her luxurious apartment. We called Mrs. Goldhurst immediately and arranged to meet at her place that evening. The address was 200 West 92nd Street.

As we approached the building, the luxurious part of my vision began to fade. The building was at the corner of 92nd and Amsterdam Avenue. It clearly had seen better days, and even then it had not been luxurious. We climbed a dark and dingy stairwell to the fourth floor. Mrs. Goldhurst opened the door. She was about five feet tall and must have weighed around 160 pounds. Her hair was steely gray, she had the shoulders of a linebacker, and her jaw made Dick Tracy's look weak.

She led us down the hallway to two modestly furnished rooms that looked out on 92nd Street. Then she showed us the bathroom, which had an old-fashioned chain-pull toilet and a tub of similar vintage. The kitchen looked as if it had been painted around the turn of the century and the fixtures bought about the same time. You could see the lathing through several gaping holes in the plaster.

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This was not the apartment of our dreams, and Mrs. Goldhurst definitely was not Mrs. Robinson. She was better. Bawdy and full of life, she was a female Falstaff. She had us laughing in minutes, and within an hour we were enjoying ourselves so thoroughly that there was no question we would take the rooms. The rent was low, and Mrs. Goldhurst said that whenever we wanted she would cook dinner for us for a dollar each.

She became the central figure in my life for the next seven years. During most of that time I was either living in her apartment or dining at her table. From the spring of 1946 until the spring of 1948, I did both.

Her full name was Genevieve Gallagher Goldhurst, but everyone called her Tiny. She was born to an Irish family in Scranton, Pennsylvania. She moved to New York to work in the early twenties and married a man named Harry Goldhurst.

Harry was on Wall Street, and in the twenties that meant doing well. Tiny and Harry settled in a prosperous suburb, Larchmont, in Westchester County. Soon there were four sons—Richard, William, Harry Jr., and Peter.

Then came the crash and with it the discovery that Harry had been a pioneer in what might be called the Boesky-Levine approach to the science of investing. A term in a federal penal institution ensued. By the time Harry got out, the 1939 New York World's Fair was about to open. He figured the city would be flooded with tourists. So what was the smart thing to do? Get into the hotel business, of course. He settled Tiny and the boys in Redbank, New Jersey, bought a hotel on Times Square, and started planning how to spend all the money he was going to make. Unfortunately, the tourists never came, at least not to Harry's hotel. His only regular guests were a troop of vaudeville midgets, who did not rank prompt payment of hotel bills high on their list of priorities. The result was that Harry went broke. In fact, he was worse than broke. He owed a lot of money, and his creditors were in hot pursuit. Harry felt it would be prudent to disappear for a while.

When he resurfaced several years later, it was as Harry Golden, editor and homespun philosopher, of Charlotte, North Carolina. He had failed again with another improbable enterprise called Midas Mineral Spring Water. The brochure read: "Since 1608 Indians have known its restorative powers." Cynics suspected that the "spring" was a broken pipe. But Harry was not easily discouraged. He started a weekly newspaper called *The Carolina Israelite*. There weren't many Jews in North Carolina, so for a while it appeared the *Israelite* would share the fate of his other enterprises. Then he had an inspiration: he created the Carolina Israelite Award and bestowed it on Bernard Baruch, the renowned financier and presidential adviser. Harry suspected, reasonably enough, that Baruch was an egomaniac and probably couldn't resist coming to Charlotte to accept the award and address a dinner in his honor. The great man came to Charlotte, and the locals were impressed. They might not have heard of Harry Golden, but they had certainly heard of Bernard Baruch. Advertisers began to include the *Israelite* in their schedules. Harry wasn't rich by any means, but at least he could afford to send for two of his sons, Billy and Harry Jr. They were in North Carolina at the time of my arrival at 92nd Street. Dick was in the Army in Japan, and Peter, who was retarded, had just been placed in an institution.

During the war years, Tiny had supported all four boys. This had not left her feeling too kindly toward Harry. In fact, his multitude of failings, and those of his sister Clara, were the subject of many of Tiny's most hilarious stories.

One thing about Tiny's storytelling took a little getting used to. She would assume you knew all the characters. When she mentioned Sam, she did not bother to explain who he was. It usually took half the story to figure it out, and sometimes it took several stories over several months before you had him clearly in your mind. But you were never to interrupt with a question like "Who's Sam?"

Gradually, however, we got to know her regular cast of characters. Our favorite was Hazel, the nymphomaniac. When Hazel's name came up in a story, you always knew what she was doing, or, if she wasn't doing it, you knew that she was thinking about it.

But Hazel was a minor character compared to Harry. However he may have wronged Tiny, he continued to occupy the center stage of her stories. I understood why when I met him in 1947. Expecting to dislike him because he had run out on his family, I was totally charmed. Within an hour or so Harry had discovered my affection for my old Sunday school hymns, and we were singing "Stand Up for Jesus" together. Harry later wrote *Only in America* and several other best-selling books and achieved considerable fame.

So did some others who passed through Tiny's apartment as roomers or as frequent dinner guests, including Ginsberg and E.L. Doctorow, whom we knew as Eddie or Edgar. James Lee went on to Hollywood, where he wrote many movies and television scripts, including "Roots." But Tiny Goldhurst was the star of 92nd Street.

Of those who both lived and dined with Tiny over a considerable period of time, I was closest to Jim-

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my Lee and Dick Goldhurst, Tiny's oldest son. Jimmy had the kind of beguiling wit that made you not want the evening to end and an interest in women that was even keener than mine. Dick was warm and kind, with the soul of a poet and, like his mother, the body of a football player. His burliness was an important protection for the rest of us, because Quinn and Kling's, the neighborhood bar where we hung out, did not include among its many endearing virtues a guarantee that there wouldn't be a fistfight or brawl on any given night.

A typical evening at Tiny's would find two or three of us already seated at the table when Tiny arrived around 6 p.m. loaded down with the bags of groceries and exhausted by a hard day's work as an office manager for a small printing company. After depositing the groceries in the kitchen, she would return to the dining room, which was also her bedroom, to sit wearily on the sofa, which was also her bed, and light a cigarette.

Her spirits would gradually brighten as she told us an amusing story about the competition between Harry and Martin, her two bosses, for the affection of the office blonde. Soon we would all be laughing, and Tiny would go to the kitchen to prepare spaghetti and cheesecake, which was the menu at least every other night, while the rest of us continued talking. Tiny didn't have a television set, so we had to entertain ourselves.

Win, place, or show

When we weren't talking, we were singing. I would lobby for my favorite hymns, but only Harry and a few old Sunday school friends from Charleston really shared my affection for them. Gershwin, Porter, and Rodgers and Hart usually won out on 92nd Street.

And then there were lyrics we came up with on our own. One was inspired by a fling Jimmy Lee and I had playing horses. To the tune of "Battle Hymn of the Republic," it began: "I have been to Hialeah, Narragansett, Churchill Downs, and you'll never catch me hanging 'round any trackless town. . . ." I had been interested in racing ever since my Uncle Lloyd took me to my first Kentucky Derby at the age of eight, but I had never made bets except at the track. Now I had a bookie at 110th and Broadway.

I began with an academic interest in comparing the various handicappers employed by the New York papers. Gradually my focus narrowed to two: Frank Ortell of the *World Telegram* and Joe Gelardi of the International News Service. As I studied various combinations of their predictions, a remarkable pattern emerged: if Gelardi picked a horse to place and Ortell picked him to win, place, or show, a show bet on that horse would pay off often enough to produce a steady, if modest profit.

I urged Jimmy to join me in pursuing this investment opportunity. We each put up ten dollars. I then inquired at neighborhood bars as to the whereabouts of a suitable bookie and soon located the gentleman at 110th and Broadway. The project was launched with two-dollar bets on Brags Rags and Northern Deb at Hialeah. Both finished in the money and they paid a total of 17 dollars, considerably better than show bets usually do. I began to bet every day, the bookie's hangout being conveniently located between Columbia and my apartment. Incredibly, we continued to win—never as much as on the first day, but each week still produced a modest profit. Then the bookie stopped accepting our show bets and demanded that from now on we bet to win. Instead of getting out, we tried to do it his way and lost all our profits as well as our original 20 dollars.

We often had guests for dinner at 92nd Street—friends from Columbia or the theater or people like Doctorow, who went to Kenyon College with Dick and Billy Goldhurst. Occasionally, someone would just appear. One of these was Herbert Huncke, whom we knew through Ginsberg. Allen had met him in the Automat on 42nd Street between 7th and 8th Avenues, which was a headquarters for junkies and petty criminals. Herbert was both. When he appeared at 92nd Street, good fellowship was not his only motive. He was usually trying to sell us something, and that something, one suspected, often was not in the hands of its rightful owner. If he was especially impecunious, Herbert would ask for the empty bottles in the apartment, which he could sell for a few cents apiece. Tiny always gave him the bottles and occasionally bought his merchandise, although the buying was done with a mournful sigh and an upward roll of the eyes as she contemplated the current penalty for receiving stolen goods.

Allen's taste for minor criminals once nearly got me in trouble. Although I continued to eat at Tiny's, in April 1948, I moved to an apartment of my own. One night around 2 a.m., Ginsberg, Kerouac, and Huncke arrived for a visit. That wasn't unusual, except that this time they brought along an exotic young woman—I'll call her Susie instead of using her real name, since her life has subsequently taken a respectable turn.

Susie and I hit it off. The next night, she called and asked if she could come by and take a bath. I said fine. When she emerged from the bathroom, she said she had had an inspiration. My apartment would be a perfect place for her to use for scoring

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with johns. Susie, it seemed, was a prostitute. She had a notebook full of clients. All she needed was a place to do business—a "pad" as she put it. Although I was anxious to make a favorable impression on Allen's friends, I said no.

Allen was not as successful at avoiding trouble. A few weeks after Susie visited my apartment, I was on the subway, reading the *Daily Mirror* over the shoulder of the person standing next to me. When he turned to the back page, I saw a large photograph of four people staring out of the rear of a paddy wagon—Allen, Susie, Herbert, and their friend Little Jack Melody.

They had been driving around Queens with Little Jack at the wheel when they were stopped by a policeman who wanted to tell them they were going the wrong way on a one-way street. Little Jack, mindful of the possible misunderstanding that might arise from the fact that the car was stolen, did not wait to hear the officer out. Instead, he jammed the accelerator to the floor and sped off into the night. As he attempted to negotiate a sharp corner, the car turned over, and its occupants quickly scattered. Allen returned to his apartment on York Avenue. He opened the door thinking he was safe at last, only to be greeted by several city officials in blue uniforms. It seemed that Allen had left his diary in the car and that it contained his address. Allen had made another mistake: he had permitted Little Jack and Herbert to use his apartment for storage, and, you guessed it, among the stored goods there were few that were the legal property of either Herbert or Little Jack. To beat the rap, Allen had to commit himself to the care of psychiatrists at Payne Whitney.

Baudelaire and Barnard girls

There are differences between my hometown of Charleston, West Virginia, and New York, and by the end of my first year at Columbia, those differences were beginning to have an effect on me. Charleston is the small town where practically everyone knows you or your family. The good side of this is that it encourages you to behave thoughtfully toward others. If you're a clerk in a store and you're rude to Mrs. Jones, it is likely that she knows several people who know you and that she will tell them about it. Also, when people have known you well for your entire life, they aren't likely to mistake you for either the purest saint or the most evil sinner. Their knowledge of you is protection against unjust accusation as well as unwarranted praise.

But all this is limiting, too, which is why many people want to escape small towns. They want to be more than they have been. Someone in New York might hire them to do great things, while the small-town employer would know their limits all too well. In other words, the song's promise—"If you can make it there, you'll make it anywhere"—is misleading. Some people make it in New York because they couldn't make it back home. They never would have gotten the chance.

New York also offers anonymity. Your private life can be your own business and no one else's in a way that's impossible in a small town. But anonymity also means that, even after living in New York for years, you can walk all the way down Fifth Avenue and not be recognized by a single human being. This may explain why so many people who go to New York thinking that they want anonymity end up trying to be celebrities or envying those who are. Some even seek identity through contact with celebrities. The most extreme example is the horde of autograph-seekers that follows in the wake of anyone famous. Telling their friends about having seen a celebrity, and proving it by showing an autograph, endows them with importance.

I was not immune to celebrityism. Having met a few of the famous during my years in New York—including Grace Kelly, John Huston, Ingrid Bergman, and William Faulkner—I became skilled at casually weaving these brief encounters into conversations with my friends and acquaintances. I could get a sense of importance even by knowing someone who knew a celebrity—"She's a close friend of Tennessee Williams, you know." A similar sense of self-importance can come—and this is especially so in the case of intellectuals—from knowing something others don't, from being among the first to divine what's in and what's out in literature and the arts.

By 1947, I was getting pretty heavily involved in this sort of thing. In other words, I had become a snob. One reason was the transfer of my career interest from politics to the theater, which had happened the previous summer. In politics, snobbery is likely to lose you votes. In the arts, it can be viewed as evidence of your higher powers of discrimination.

But a more important cause in my case was insecurity. From the secure world of Charleston High School, where I was "most likely to succeed" in my class, I had entered a world where what I considered my exceptional promise was not instantly recognized. There were a lot of very bright students who were better prepared for Columbia than I was.

During my first term I puzzled over the phrase "perne in a gyre" in "Sailing to Byzantium." Should I confess, I wondered, that I hadn't a clue as to what it meant? Of course not—I would only confirm that I was a hick from West Virginia. So I slipped off

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to the library to consult *A Vision*, the book in which Yeats explains his philosophy. But instead of enlightenment, I encountered even greater obscurity in those bewildering diagrams of intersecting cones, and my anxiety became worse.

I finished the first term with two As and four Bs. Although a perfectly respectable record in retrospect, it opened a crack of doubt in my academic self-assurance. At Charleston High School I had gotten As without unseemly sweat. Now it was clear that I would not get many unless I became a grind. I enjoyed the pleasures of New York far too much to take that possibility seriously.

Instead, I gradually became a snob, trying to impress others not with my performance but with my awareness of what was intellectually chic. I could talk knowingly about the latest literary controversy or casually drop the names of the authors who were "in." In the library I would feign total immersion in Baudelaire, especially if a Barnard girl was sitting nearby. The only movie theater I would deign to enter was the Thalia on West 95th Street. It featured ancient classics as well as the work of the French and Italian directors who were fashionable in the forties and who seemed to have a special fondness for overexposed film and scratchy sound tracks.

This was a period during which you could not, as I secretly did, admire a Victorian house or the beaux arts splendor of Grand Central Station. Picasso was in, and so was Henry James. I liked neither, but I pretended that I did. The first minutes of an encounter with someone you wanted to impress were spent flashing your taste badges. And your worst fear was that you might flash the wrong one, that you might be praising last year's poet instead of this year's. So you made sure to keep abreast of those publications that could keep you informed of what was in and what was out—the *New Yorker* and the *Partisan Review* were the essential ones.

My grades began to plummet. I was afraid to commit myself to the effort that might produce an A and then have to face the fact that I couldn't make it even when I was really trying.

In January 1948 I got a call from the dean's office about my sinking grades. This resulted in a referral to a psychiatrist. I knew I had lost my way and needed help. I was turning into someone I didn't like at all, and I was ready to open myself to someone who wanted to come to my rescue. I was lucky enough to find a really good, caring doctor.

At the same time that I was seeking the psychiatrist, another benign influence appeared in my life. That spring, Van Doren offered a remarkable course that began with Kafka's *The Trial* and *The Castle*, continued through *The Divine Comedy*, and ended with *Don Quixote*. It was a progression from lost bewilderment to what became my true faith—that I had to pursue my own vision even if the rest of the world thought I was only tilting at windmills.

During the worst of my snobbish period, I was fortunate to have friends like Tiny and Jimmy and Dick, who could laugh at my pretentiousness. And then there was Allen, who was constantly saying, "Come down," by which he meant strip away all the posturing that separates you from your true self. Allen himself was not above impressing people with his sophistication. And in that sense he was part of my problem. Occasionally, he would suggest that it was hip to smoke marijuana (he called it "tea") or to be gay, but most of the time when we talked, I felt he was not trying to impress me and that I did not have to try to impress him.

Crucial double play

Another factor in my salvation was sports. A baseball or football fan quickly discovers that the blue-collar worker sitting in the bleachers is just as likely to be able to discuss the finer points of the game as a Ph.D. from Harvard. It was the same lesson about people that I had learned in the Army and at Charleston High, but during my most snobbish period, in 1947, its only reinforcement came when I went to Ebbets Field or Yankee Stadium.

A few years later, my interest in baseball may have saved my life. It was a Sunday afternoon—or maybe Labor Day—in early September 1951. The New York Giants and the Brooklyn Dodgers were locked in one of the great pennant races of the era, the one that ended with Bobby Thomson's famous home run. I was dating a young woman from Brooklyn whose father was not only hot-tempered but highly, and rightly, suspicious of my intentions toward his daughter. The one thing he and I had in common was baseball.

On this particular afternoon, he had gone to the beach and his daughter and I had the apartment to ourselves. We watched the Giants and Dodgers on the living room television for a few innings, but mutual affection soon led us into the bedroom. The situation was developing along natural lines when suddenly we heard the front door open and someone walk in. She whispered, "Oh my God, it's my father." This presented several problems, not the least of which was how we were going to get from the bedroom to the living room unobserved. There was a clear view from the front door down the hallway that we would have to cross, so it was not going to be easy.

We were given a moment's reprieve when we

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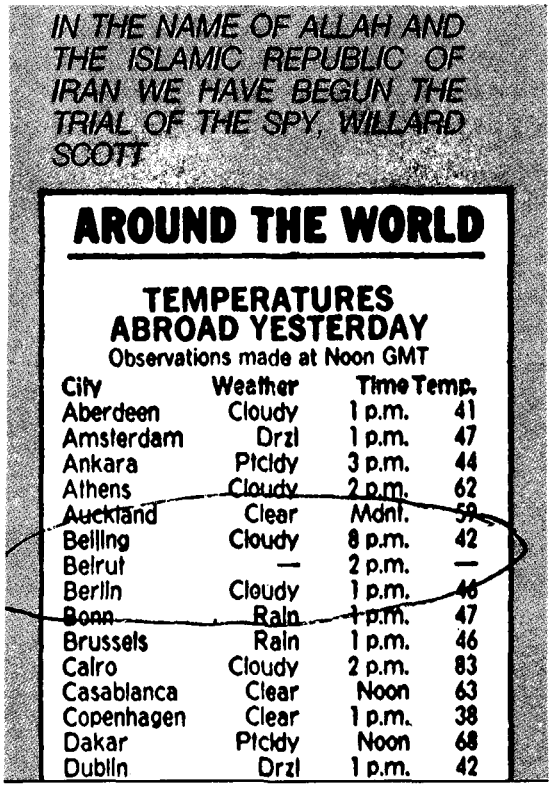
heard the father go into the kitchen. In that moment, she slipped into her dress and rushed down the hall to greet him and keep him in the kitchen so I could put on my pants and shirt and sneak into the living room. By the time he entered the room, I was sitting before the television set absorbed in the game. He greeted me and sat down to watch, but I sensed that I was not yet out of the woods. For one thing I had not managed to get my shoes on. The daughter's disheveled aspect, which I probably shared, might also arouse suspicion. But when the father complained that he had missed the last inning coming from the beach, I saw an opportunity to lay his suspicions to rest. I immediately launched into: "With the Giants leading two to nothing and one out, Snider doubled off Maglie, then Robinson tripled, scoring Snider, but with Robinson on third, Pafko hit a scorcher down the third-base line. Thomson grabbed it, tagged Robinson, and threw to Lockman at first for a double play." Although her father was disappointed that the Dodgers had blown an opportunity to tie the score, he was obviously reassured that I had been attending closely to the game. This feeling, unfortunately was not shared by the daughter, who realized that I had been listening while we were in bed. She refused to be comforted by my involved explanation of how the human mind can operate on two levels. □

TIDBITS AND OUTRAGES



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AROUND THE WORLD

TEMPERATURES ABROAD YESTERDAY

Observations made at Noon GMT

City	Weather	Time	Temp.
Aberdeen	Cloudy	1 p.m.	41
Amsterdam	Drzl	1 p.m.	47
Ankara	Pticdy	3 p.m.	44
Athens	Cloudy	2 p.m.	62
Auckland	Clear	Mdnt.	59
Beijing	Cloudy	8 p.m.	42
Beirut	—	2 p.m.	—
Berlin	Cloudy	1 p.m.	46
Bonn	Rain	1 p.m.	47
Brussels	Rain	1 p.m.	46
Cairo	Cloudy	2 p.m.	83
Casablanca	Clear	Noon	63
Copenhagen	Clear	1 p.m.	38
Dakar	Pticdy	Noon	68
Dublin	Drzl	1 p.m.	42

"LOOK, WE'RE NOT GOING TO MAKE THE PROMISES OF THE PAST. BUT I CAN GUARANTEE YOU THAT, WHEN IT COMES TIME TO SELECT OUR CABINET, WE'RE GOING TO BE TAKING A VERY CLOSE LOOK AT O.J. SIMPSON."

While campaigning for the New York primary, Michael Dukakis said that if he is elected president "I'll do what I can to get a major league team to Buffalo."

THE MOST LOYAL VICE PRESIDENT IN AMERICAN HISTORY

In Idaho, George Bush said of his years with President Reagan: "We've had triumphs, we've made some mistakes, we've had sex."

LIFE IMITATES ART

Four cast members of "L.A. Law" refused an appearance this week at Harvard Law School because the school wouldn't provide first-class, round-trip airfare.

SO MUCH FOR THE WIMP FACTOR

According to a professor at Ohio State University, Woody Hayes endorsed George Bush just before he died.

THE FEC DISALLOWED THE CONTRIBUTION BUT UPHELD THE CAMPAIGN'S EXPENDITURE ON ROSARY BEADS.

Republican Tom Blair, challenging Senator Paul Sarbanes, lists a $1,500 campaign outlay to a Massachusetts convent for "prayers and spiritual support."

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What Alcoholics Anonymous can teach the rest of us.

On The Wagon

by Robert Doar

Henrietta Seiberling, a divorced mother of two in Akron, Ohio, was at home with her children when the stranger called. The caller had gotten Henrietta's name from an Episcopal minister who said Henrietta might be able to help him with his problem. His problem? "I'm a rum hound from New York," said the stranger.

It was May 1935, and the stranger was Bill Wilson, a failed stockbroker from Brooklyn who had come to Akron on one more ill-fated business trip. A big-talking and manipulative drunk, Wilson had spent years of his life drinking all day and every night. His hands shook so badly in the morning that he needed a glass of gin and a beer to eat breakfast. Never able to hold a job, Wilson lived off his wife, who worked in a department store.

For the two months preceding his trip to Akron, however, Wilson had remained sober. Now, alone in a small, unfamiliar city, he was dying for a drink—and looking for someone to talk him out of it.

Like Wilson, Seiberling was a member of the Oxford group, a nondenominational religious organization that gave particular attention to drunks. At Oxford group meetings she had met and come to know a tall, taciturn, drunk named Dr. Bob Smith. (Smith was a physician who specialized in rectal surgery, and the joke around Akron was that when you went to Smith you *really* bet your ass.) For more than a year Seiberling had been trying to convince Smith to stay sober. Now with the call from the out-of-towner, she saw her chance. "This was like manna from heaven," she thought at the time.

And perhaps it was. The following day, Seiberling had Wilson and Smith to dinner at her home. When she put the two men alone in the upstairs library for some after-dinner conversation, Alcoholics Anonymous was born.

Seiberling's simple act of neighborliness kicked off something big. That first night in 1935 Bill Wilson and Bob Smith formed a fellowship of two that has since grown to almost two million. (Millions more have benefited from A.A. but are not counted by A.A. because they no longer attend its meetings regularly.) Through their efforts (Smith concentrated his in Akron, Wilson went national) and through the publication of Wilson's book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A. has become a worldwide organization, with 76 thousand groups in 119 countries. More than 90 thousand A.A. meetings are held every week in the United States.

Saving lives is what A.A. does. The National Council on Alcoholism estimates that more than 97 thousand people suffer alcohol-related deaths every year. Without A.A. that number would be much higher. What's more, alcoholism is emotionally contagious. It scars more than just one person. It damages families, friendships, the work place. It poisons relations between people. Every time a person takes his first steps toward recovery through A.A., he is also making himself a better parent, sibling, and friend.

The history, teachings, and structure of Alcoholics Anonymous is the subject of Nan Robertson's new book.* A longtime reporter for *The New York Times*, whose story about her battle with toxic shock syndrome won her a Pulitzer Prize in 1985, Robertson is a member of A.A. Though the last chapter tells the tale of Robertson's own sickness (when she was the *Times*'s correspondent in Paris her lunchtime intake was two double scotches and a carafe of wine), *Getting Better* is much more than a personal narrative. And it is more than a straight recounting of the history of A.A.

Instead, *Getting Better* is a thoughtfully written brief for why A.A. is a force for good in the world. Here is an organization that, without depending on donations from the government, and without a lot

**Getting Better: Inside Alcoholics Anonymous.* Nan Robertson. *William Morrow, $17.95.*

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of self-promotion (and the self-congratulation that comes with it), has helped millions of Americans in the most significant way possible. Robertson's depiction of recovering alcoholics is refreshingly hopeful, but the best thing about Robertson's book is what it teaches nonalcoholics. The lessons of A.A.—community, spirituality, humility, and service—deserve a larger audience than just perpetual elbow benders.

A plastic rocking horse

A.A.'s Twelve Steps outline the separate acts that can lead to sobriety. These include admitting powerlessness over alcohol, taking a personal inventory, and seeking forgiveness from friends and family. The Twelve Traditions set forth a flexible guide for A.A. group activity.

Everyone can understand the ideas behind A.A.; it is much harder to follow the prescription. It begins with community. "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity," reads the first of Wilson's Twelve Traditions. This emphasis was born in that first meeting between Smith and Wilson. Smith said later, "Wilson was the first living human with whom I had ever talked who knew what he was talking about in regard to alcoholism *from actual experience*." Wilson and Smith had found an answer that had eluded physicians and social workers: dialogue yes, but with everyone on equal terms. "Many alcoholics have sought help elsewhere," writes Robertson, "but those 'helpers' have almost invariably been superior people—doctors, bosses, members of the clergy . . . . It is quite wonderful for the newcomer to find himself in a place where everyone has once sunk as low as he has."

The central expression of this community is the A.A. meeting. No doctor, no foundation, no government social program has as its principal place of business a setting as modest as an A.A. meeting. Meetings are most frequently held in church basements, which by day are often filled with preschoolers. In the typical meeting that Robertson depicts there is a plastic rocking horse in the corner. On the wall are posters with some of A.A.'s favorite sayings. *One day at a time. Keep it simple. I am responsible.* Coffee is brewing alongside trays of cookies. When the meeting begins there are anywhere from 20 to 40 people spread around the room. Robertson quotes a 35-year-old man describing his first meeting: "I felt that I had arrived at a place where I was very much at home, and that these people knew what they were talking about."

"Nobody pushes reluctant members to tell their story in a meeting or even to utter a word unless and until they feel ready," Robertson writes. "The habit of masking one's deepest self, of lying about everything and to everyone in order to continue the habit is deeply ingrained in drunks. Therefore the value of talking honestly to others who will understand is a crucial strength of A.A. Retelling a personal story while discovering new truths about oneself continues to lighten the burden of years of guilt and denial."

A second key aspect of A.A. is spirituality, the belief that there is a greater power than man. Though the power is often referred to as God, there is an antireligious aspect to A.A. Both Wilson and Smith were uncomfortable, even hostile, toward organized religion. In the Twelve Steps, the first reference to God is followed by the words, "as we understand him." "It's not a religious program, it's a spiritual program," A.A. members are fond of saying. Robertson is particulary self-conscious about this issue. "Some people think we're a bunch of religious nuts," she tells Wilson's widow when she explains why she wants to write the book.

But there is no getting around it. Outside of the big cities the references to God come frequently. And though this is changing, many Jews still feel uneasy at A.A. meetings. But the amount of discomfort depends greatly on the group. A.A. members are encouraged to shop around for the meeting that suits them. A pamphlet issued by the Hazelden rehabilitation center for alcoholics in Minnesota describes the etiquette for A.A. meetings: "No one makes an effort to keep [a speaker] from referring to God at meetings, and no one makes an effort to force anyone to talk about God." For Wilson, and for many in A.A., "the God part," as Robertson calls it, is a product less of faith than of survival. "Our human resources. . . .were not sufficient; they failed utterly," Wilson wrote. "We had to find a power by which we could live, and it had to be *A Power Greater Than Ourselves*." But that power could be anything. One member described it at a meeting: "The only place I ever found God was here—in your faces, and the way you talked."

After community and spirituality, the third essential ingredient of A.A. is humility. Alcoholics are often ambitious and compulsive achievers, constantly projecting into the future. In a nonalcoholic these qualities are double-edged—virtues as well as defects. But to the alcoholic they are often a cause for drinking. In A.A. alcoholics are constantly urged to let go, keep it simple, stop trying to control. "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change," is the first line of the prayer recited at many A.A. meetings. The key word is "accept" and it is related to more than just an alcoholic's powerlessness against alcohol. The alcoholic has to accept that he

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cannot always control his world. Consistent with this approach, A.A. sets no lofty goals. Robertson writes, "A.A. reduces the problem to manageable size. Members are asked only to stay away from the first drink, for today only."

After awhile A.A. members learn to apply this attitude toward other aspects of their lives. A doctor describes how other alcoholic doctors respond to the program:

"All the new doctors. . .seem to be under tremendous compulsion to recite their curriculum vitae: their medical schools, their hospital affiliation. They try to make it clear to everyone else that they have great medical knowledge. They make references to some medical issue. In some way, without anybody saying anything, this kind of behavior gradually tapers off. The newcomers begin to realize that instead of 'I am what I do,' the group's silent message is, 'You are how sober you are today—and the rest of it doesn't matter.' "

The emphasis on humility is reflected in the organizational structure of A.A. All A.A. groups are self-supporting and autonomous. Though A.A.'s national headquarters in New York publishes A.A.'s literature and organizes the national conventions, the individual groups are granted complete control over their own affairs. "Represent us, don't boss us," was Wilson's instruction to the national office. The handful of alcoholics who work at the headquarters (there are no titles) are rotated every two years so as to guard against anyone building up a fiefdom. No one is permitted to donate more than $1,000, and publicity is strongly frowned upon. In 1959 Wilson refused a *Time* cover story because it violated his conviction that humility was the key to sobriety.

Heiresses and plumbers

One of the the most often misunderstood practices of A.A. and one that is closely tied to the concept of humility, is the anonymity. In part, it aims to protect members' reputations in the nonalcoholic world. But even more important, it keeps them from becoming too proud of their achievement—and mindful that a relapse is only a drink away. Describing the reason for anonymity, Wilson said, "Its deeper purpose is to keep those fool egos of ours from running hog-wild after money and fame."

This raises one of the few problems with the book. In order to write it Robertson had to sacrifice *her* anonymity. And there can be no question that Robertson is proud—damn proud—of her recovery. How she reconciles that with the A.A. emphasis on humility is hard to see. I don't think she does. Instead she ignores the contradiction in the belief that it doesn't matter as much as getting out the story of A.A. She may be right.

A.A. also discourages judging others. "In the subculture that is A.A.," writes Robertson, "most of the world's yardsticks for success do not count." Members try to refrain from commenting on another's age, appearance, or profession. And A.A. is a remarkably diverse organization, with heiresses sitting alongside plumbers. Though there are few blacks, there are many homosexuals.

But when it comes to drug addicts, many A.A. members are less than true to their beliefs. Drug addicts have found the A.A. program useful but not always welcoming. Though in many cities it is not unusual for a member to begin his comments, "My name is ---- and I am a drug addict and an alcoholic," some groups have started over-30-only meetings. The message is clear—No Drug Addicts Please. This is an unfortunate response because A.A. is remarkably successful in arresting drug addiction. It is also ironic because Wilson would not have approved. "I never heard him bitch about anyone," said a man who joined A.A. in the 1940s and was one of its first homosexuals. "It wouldn't have mattered if I was a cannibal."

Another illustration of A.A.'s tolerance is the A.A. attitude toward drinking by nonalcoholics. Unlike antismoking fanatics, A.A.s do not preach; they don't even disapprove. "We are careful never to show intolerance or hatred of drinking as an institution. Experience shows that such an attitude is not helpful to anyone," wrote Wilson.

Robertson does not always live up to A.A.'s ideals. She occasionally exhibits a surprising inability to forgive some of her fellow members. After describing a meeting where Greg made the mistake of criticizing Susan for expressing too much resentment, Robertson approvingly describes the tit-for-tat response of a group of members who ask Susan out for coffee, pointedly leaving Greg behind.

The final lesson of A.A. that deserves greater circulation is the concept of service. Though A.A. does not recruit new members (because the first step to sobriety is recognizing the problem, and that can only come from within), it does teach its members that their recovery is not complete until they have engaged in what is called Twelfth Stepping—making a personal effort to help another alcoholic maintain his sobriety. "Nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics," Wilson wrote.

New members are encouraged to find "sponsors," who will act as special friends during their first difficult months in A.A. Just being available to talk is the sponsors' main job. But they also will make visits and speak to the alcoholics' family. This can thrust them into the most volatile family situations. And

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ironically their first suggestion to a family dealing with a drinking alcoholic is "let him drink." Only when he hits bottom will he be able to see his way out.

Teaching teetotalers

A.A.'s lessons of community, spirituality, humility, and service may seem like hopelessly woolly notions, but America suffers from an absence of all four. In the Brooklyn neighborhood where Wilson lived (and where I grew up) the A.A. meetings have become the most visible and vital gatherings of the week. Even the neighborhood kids know when and where they are taking place. Surely such comings-together shouldn't be limited only to those who can't have one martini without having five.

The same goes for spirituality. Though many liberals squirm at the idea, recognizing a greater power helps to ground one in moral and ethical principles. It provides confidence that there is a moral order, and without that confidence people have a tendency to lack all conviction.

Of course it wouldn't be prudent to wield a heavy hand with A.A.'s type of spirituality. You wouldn't want the leader of a local jobs training program leading his crew in prayer. (Besides, the ACLU wouldn't let him.) But A.A. shows that religion, even when it's not organized under the hub of Catholicism or Judaism or whatever, can still motivate people to do good deeds. For the millions of Americans who are in that twilight zone between not belonging to any congregation and not entirely rejecting the notion of a higher being, A.A. proves there can be a middle ground—religion without church.

Humility and service are closely related. With the first, the second is more effective. The romance of the reformer, the activist's dynamic rhetoric are so often a mask for self-absorbed ambition. Rather than helping, they are obstacles to change. How much better would be the attitude that says "Let's stop pointing fingers. Who cares who gets the credit? These are tough problems. Let's get to work." That is the A.A. way. In the long run it is a step by step, *realistic*, view of social change that results in the greatest benefit, not the idealist's promise (or demand) for change now.

What Bill Wilson and Bob Smith started in Henrietta Seiberling's library has bequeathed to the country a population of people who are more than merely alive because of A.A.—they are better citizens. For the rest of us who never hid a bottle in the kitchen cupboard, woke up with the shakes, or brawled in a barroom, A.A. has much to offer. □

"What's that? Martin Luther King had 'neo-orthodox misgivings' about Rauschenbusch's 'neo-social gospel?'"

Why Journalists Can't Write About Religion

by Bill McKibben

By my best count, Mark Silk's new history of religion and politics in postwar America*, which mentions the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. by name 21 times, refers to the Reverend James Albert Pike, flaky Episcopal bishop of California, 30 times. This is a little like writing a 400-page cookbook and devoting 150 pages to recipes requiring potato chips. And it is symptomatic of the disease that infects Silk's book and much of what is written about religion. The meaning of religion is ignored. I am afraid that, like the liver man seeing a really good case of hepatitis, I'm more interested in the disease than the patient, which at any rate will soon die in the bookstores.

To return to our original example, Bishop Pike was ordained into the Episcopal Church in 1946 and hired as chaplain at Columbia in 1949. He gave jaz-

Bill McKibben is a writer in the Adirondack mountains in New York state.

**Spiritual Politics: Religion and America Since World War II.* Mark Silk. *Simon & Schuster, $19.95.*

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zy sermons, hosted a Sunday morning TV show, and was elected Bishop of California, where he was fashionably liberal (building a cathedral with stained glass windows of Thurgood Marshall) and dabbled in mild heresy, "hint[ing] at doubts about the Trinity, the Virgin Birth, and Salvation Through Christ Alone." He later participated in a televised seance and promoted parapsychology before dying in the desert of the Holy Land where he was wandering around in the sun looking for a spiritual breakthrough. The Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. led a nonviolent "civil rights" campaign that won an end to segregation and voting rights for black people. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. So why is Pike more prominent in Silk's book than King?

The first answer seems to be that Pike wrote for *The Christian Century*, one of a half-dozen or so publications that Silk, a reporter for the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, constantly cites. (The others include the Jesuit weekly, *America*, the *Partisan Review*, *Politics*, and the *New Yorker*.) And he showed up posthumously on the literati radar screen, thanks to an "eviscerating" essay by Joan Didion. This probably compensated for his never having been actually connected to Harvard University, though that would certainly have been even better. Father Leonard Feeney, a heretic priest who operated for several years from that university's unofficial Catholic student center is mentioned by name 43 times, and his followers, the Feeneyites, five times. Both Feeney and Pike are, in their limited way, interesting—were Silk to write a history of modern American heresy he would have two chapters in the bank. But the reason they have been included here, I think, is their attachment to and separation from the religious-intellectual establishment that is the organizing principle of Silk's book. He, like most academics and journalists, wants to write about Religion, not religion. We read in the papers detailed accounts about what the Pope has to say about Poland, but not what he has to say about Paul. This tendency, as we shall see, distorts our understanding. Silk carries it to extremes. (But, of course, this kind of writing is also easier; it's far simpler to cite journal articles than it is to wrestle with the meaning of Galatians.)

In Silk's eyes, faith in America is a phenomenon best understood through the records of the National Council of Churches and its predecessors and in the pages of elite journals. Developments unskilled outsiders might think important in and of themselves—the rise of Billy Graham, for instance—Silk chronicles through the eyes of this establishment. We learn that *The Christian Century* was "warily noncommittal" about Graham in 1951 during a large Seattle crusade and, by 1952, "cold" toward his performance in San Francisco, but by March 1954 had had a "change of heart" and regarded him as "extraordinarily teachable and humble." What had happened? Graham had entered the sanctum of establishment Protestantism (New York City's Union Theological Seminary), spoken for 45 minutes, and spent half an hour answering questions. He impressed them with his sincerity, even leading one theologian to say, in the *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, that he could probably "be used for highly constructive Christian purposes."

This theme is carried through to the bitter end. On the penultimate page, immediately after asking whether or not America might be in for a new Great Awakening, Silk pops the really hot question: Will *Partisan Review* spring to life with a symposium on a new, new, *new* failure of nerve? The reference is to two earlier *Partisan Review* symposiums about intellectuals and religion, but, believe me, you'd know what he was talking about if you had read the book.

The flaw in this method of historical research need hardly be described. It is a little like writing a history of American politics in the 1980s and restricting your research to the pages of *The Washington Monthly* and *Human Events*. *The Washington Monthly* and *Human Events* may well be fine publications, influential among their respective coteries, but it would probably be good, just as a backup, to talk to some actual politicians (or even voters) as well. Silk even proves that the religious Establishment swung little political weight. In the aftermath of the Six Day War, he reports, the former president of Union was "aghast at Israel's onslaught," *The Christian Century* said Christians would not "sign a blank check" in regard to the war, the National Council of Churches "struggled for neutrality"—and 346 of 438 senators and representatives agreed Israel should not withdraw its troops from the occupied territories without assurances of national security. Many of the congressmen donned "Dayan-like" eyepatches to show their support.

Junior high health class

So why does Silk care so much about this establishment in a book theoretically devoted to "religion and politics?" It's the deeply ingrained desire, I think, to avoid embarrassing discussions of belief and faith. Dogma shows up here a few times—Mr. Feeney's loony, single-minded devotion to the proposition *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* (outside the church no salvation) and the Reverend Bailey Smith's 1980 announcement that God didn't hear the prayers of Jews. (The Reverend Smith is referred to 25 times by name.) These two excursions into "theology" are interesting to Silk because they

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represent rips in the institutional fabric of the Judeo-Christian establishment, papered over with meetings of the Anti-Defamation League and interfaith committees and by Richard Cardinal Cushing of Boston taking tea at Harvard's Lowell House. But this fabric has little to do with the tapestry of American religion. The real issues—the ones that have broken into the political sphere repeatedly—have to do with *content*, with what the Gospels and the Scriptures *say*. This often makes scholars and journalists unhappy, for questions of faith remain largely taboo in their circles, but it's impossible to write a useful book on this topic that (to play our numerical game one last time) mentions *The Christian Century* on 20 pages and the Bible on four. It is like a junior high school health class about sex—you come away barely understanding the mechanics, much less the import. Religion concerns death and what happens in its wake, sin, forgiveness, reconciliation, the right life, selflessness, topics that are personal, political, and usually both.

Rethink their duties

The case of Martin Luther King makes this point. To Silk, a piece King wrote for *The Christian Century*'s "How My Mind Has Changed" series is of prime importance. According to Silk, King wrote that he had begun his career as a thoroughgoing liberal but that reading Reinhold Niebuhr had tempered his optimism, though he had never succumbed to an "all-out acceptance of neo-orthodoxy," and indeed found himself in basic agreement with the Social Gospel of Walter Rauschenbusch, which he proposed to put into action with a "Gandhian *satyagraha*." King's remarks may well have been, as Silk says, "carefully calculated" for his clerical audience, but they do not get at the heart of his struggle. That movement was embedded in a theological notion—that we are all God's children. The struggle took as its motif a scriptural episode, the Exodus from oppression of the Jews. And though its methods were developed in large measure by Gandhi, there was no doubt about the Mahatma's principal source—the Sermon on the Mount. These are the fundamental reasons Martin Luther King's campaign worked. To a country steeped in these images, he was recognizable as Moses, and his life and death were an imitation of Christ's. "Turning the other cheek" resonated in our culture. He had a lever to move the conscience of the American majority. King's vast accomplishment lay not in ridding the readers of *The Christian Century* of "neo-orthodox misgivings" about his "neo-Social gospel." He changed the hearts of half the country.

Similarly, though less dramatically, both the rise of and the reaction against Jerry Falwell and the Moral Majority (a reaction so complete that politicians in his home state wish fervently not to be endorsed by him) had much to do with the content of the Scriptures. Most of his followers sincerely believed fornication (to say nothing of secular humanism) led to eternal hellfire; most of the rest of the country sincerely believed that this was hypocritical. It wasn't that they didn't want him interfering in their libertine pursuits or that they feared he was damaging the Judeo-Christian balance in America, it was that they thought the Moral Majority wasn't moral.

In this same period, members of the establishment churches, in my view, did more than anyone else to prevent the Reagan administration from invading Nicaragua with their demonstration that such a move would result in massive protest—not the five-years-delayed protest of the Vietnam era but immediate and dramatic reaction from large numbers of Catholics and Protestants. These mainline denominations, especially American Catholicism, have shifted in the last several decades from pillars of the American establishment to independent actors—critics. Those bishops who think nuclear weapons might be morally defensible find themselves on the defensive, and many are those who find that old god

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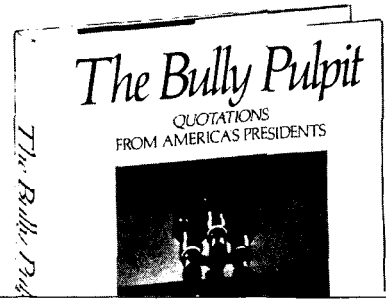

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capitalism an idol. This is *not* an injection of social activism into religion. It is an injection of religion—of Moses battling the Pharaoh, of the prophetic denunciations, of the parables and the Sermon on the Mount—into an institution that like all institutions tends toward conservatism. Though not as dramatic, it is comparable to the change in the Latin American Catholic church from a superstition-spreading, consciousness-dampening friend of the oligarchs into a strident advocate of the poor. These events are connected; the developing liberation theologies of the Third World have begun to sink in, convincing significant numbers of religious Americans to rethink their duties to human beings elsewhere.

In part this is an intellectual development—Gustavo Gutierrez's book *A Theology of Liberation*, which gave voice to the new Catholicism, will prove to be more important by far to the history of American religion than any document Silk cites. But it is an intellectual development that grows out of the reality of oppression (or opulence) and finds its meaning in concrete, physical action. Journalists would sooner accept pat and superficial sociological explanations—that concerns with social justice among American clerics and churchgoers are a fad explainable by trends in the secular society, a hangover from the 1960s, perhaps—than deal with dangerous ideas like, "Are we living too high?" or "Should I, myself, feed the hungry?" These sort of questions embarrass us, as they should.

One could conclude, as Silk seems to, that the rejection in the past year or two of the religious right helps prove that we don't need to worry about such things—that cooler heads have prevailed and "American religion [is] slouching back towards normalcy." But all along he was concerned only to look for "normalcy" (that is, what *The Christian Century* thought) and aberration (what Bishop Pike did). In the process, he misses what actually happened. □

WHO'S WHO

If **George Bush** wins in November, insiders say, State will be **James Baker**'s and Treasury **Richard Darman**'s. There will also be some reward for Bush's agent inside the Reagan White House, **Frank Donatelli**. . . .

If **Michael Dukakis** wins, his national security adviser now seems likely to be **Madeline Albright**, who is on the faculty at Georgetown University. A protege of **Zbigniew Brzezinski**, Albright is a centrist who is less likely than her mentor to see a Soviet plot behind everything that happens. Like her probable new boss, she is steady, not prone to rock the boat or come up with imaginative proposals. One of her assets is that, as the former wife of the newspaper heir, **Joseph Albright**, she is independently wealthy and will not have to cadge Seiko watches, hide cash of dubious origin in her safe, or try to hustle future consultancies, as have her recent predecessors. . . .

Those who have known **Albert Gore** to be a man of principle and intelligence during his years in the House and Senate remain aghast at the shallow cynicism of his presidential campaign. His friends suggest one explanation may be that both his father and his mother attribute Gore Sr.'s loss of his Senate seat in 1970 to too much principle in his campaign. Albert Jr. apparently decided he was not going to make the same mistake. Thus the meeting with Shamir, the switch on the two aircraft carriers, and the panting pursuit of **Ed Koch**'s endorsement. . . .

The word is that the next head of the National Security Agency will be Rear Admiral **William O. Studeman**, who is now director of Naval Intelligence. . . .

In—*White House*: Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs—**Andrew H. Card**; Deputy Counsel to the President—**Philip D. Brady**; Special Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs (House)—**Gerald J. McKienan**. *Defense*: Undersecretary of the Army—**Michael P. Stone**. *Health and Human Services*: Assistant Secretary, Policy, Budget, and Administration—**Henry A. Ventura**; Assistant Secretary for Human Development Services—**Syney Olson**. *Interior*: Director of the Bureau of Mines—**Thomas Ary**. *Justice*: Deputy Attorney General—**Harold G. Christensen**; Acting Assistant Attorney General—**John C. Keeney**. *Commissions*: Chairwoman, Federal Maritime Commission—**Elaine L. Chao**.

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POLITICAL BOOKNOTES

The World We Created at Hamilton High. Gerald Grant. *Harvard University Press, $24.95.* The education reform movement is settling into flabby middle age. Five years ago, enlightened education leaders like Albert Shanker were talking about career ladders and teacher competency tests; today Shanker talks vaguely about giving teachers more freedom to experiment with computers and audio tapes. Legislative victories in state capitals have given way to murky theorizing about how to improve education at the school level.

This shift seems premature: legislative solutions have not been exhausted. For example, although most states have mandated competency tests for prospective teachers, only a handful have taken the additional step of testing teachers already inside the classroom. Still, reformers are right that the fate of our schools will ultimately be determined at ground level. And if education reform depends on the performance of individual schools, citizens and policymakers would be wise to start learning what makes them tick. Gerald Grant's book is a good place to start.

Grant, a sociologist at Syracuse University, conducted research on one Syracuse high school over an eight-year period, eventually settling in full-time to teach urban anthropology (and recruit students to conduct research for his book). But Grant wasn't satisfied to know the school as well as its teachers and students did. He also dug into the school's history.

When Nottingham High, the real name of Grant's "Hamilton High," opened in 1953, it served mostly upper-middle class whites. Academically, Nottingham was a success. Students performed at least two hours of homework a night, and nearly everyone went on to college. But the price was racial segregation. Nottingham desegregated in 1965 in order to qualify for newly available federal funds. The result was racial tension that boiled over into violence. During one cafeteria riot, even the principal suffered a fractured skull. As Nottingham became a war zone, wealthy students fled to the suburbs and academic performance went into a tailspin. Between 1967 and 1974, the mean SAT score fell 60 points.

Grant clearly believes that, no matter how painful, integration was necessary and worthwhile. But he bemoans two power shifts. One was the increased leverage of outsiders over Nottingham. For example, two Supreme Court cases and a subsequent ACLU statement led the school board to subject discipline procedures to "grievance and courtroom-like review." Grant argues that fear of legal retribution left the school staff too timid to punish misbehaving students. The second power shift was the new freedom afforded Nottingham students. Nearly half the credits required to graduate could be earned by taking electives that ranged from TV Production to How to Fix Your Bachelor Pad. It wasn't until the reform-minded 1980s that the school board toughened graduation requirements. Finally, SAT scores started climbing again. By 1985, scores were two-thirds of the way out of the post-desegregation trough.

Nottingham's story carries the reader only halfway through Grant's book. Suddenly, what has been a crisp narrative turns vague, abstract, and filled with jargon like "value hierarchies," as Grant wrestles with the question of how to establish a positive "ethos" in schools like Nottingham. Eventually, Grant gets around to his point: schools and teachers need greater autonomy.

Autonomy is the new vogue in education reform; even Mad Dog William Bennett is advocating it. (In a recent Education Department report, he complained that "the principal enjoys little real management latitude.") In theory, autonomy is a good idea. Certainly the 1970s student-rights movement got out of control and stripped administrators of needed authority. But Grant understates the need for the state and even the federal government to keep an eye on things. In the 1960s, outside, "impersonal" forces were required to end segregation in Syracuse schools; in the 1980s, these forces pushed schools to bolster curricula and make teachers accountable.

I suspect Grant would have been less critical of outside interference had he written his book about a school in a reform state like South Carolina. In 1984, South Carolina legislated an overall increase in teachers' salaries, merit pay, no-pass, no-play rules, alternative teacher certification, and a new exit exam that students must pass before graduation starting in 1990. The impact of these "impersonal" forces on Orangeburg-Wilkinson High School, where I recently spent some time, has been almost entirely favorable. Fearful that O-W students will fail the exit exam, school administrators now automatically enroll students who score poorly on basic skills tests into a rigorous, daily remediation course. Were the schools' test scores to decline, the school district would risk being declared "impaired" by the state, giving the governor authority to fire the superintendent. "I live in fear of getting impaired," says the superintendent who oversees O-W. He doesn't seem a bit resentful.

Obviously principals and teachers

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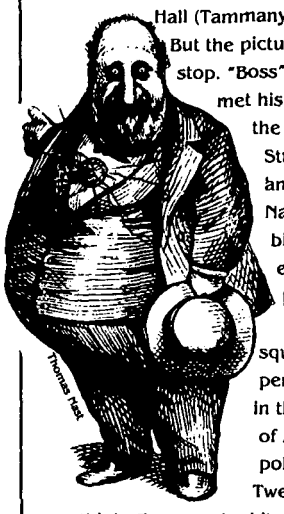

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are primarily responsible for school reform. But the reform movement's eagerness to shift power back to the schools makes me uneasy. More than anything else, the trend probably reflects the need to reassure the education establishment. At a recent conference of the South Carolina branch of the National Education Association, I saw a speaker draw cheers from a roomful of disgruntled teachers by declaring, "Accountability is the darling word of the far right." Teachers unions are so weary of public scrutiny that education reformers now find it prudent to stroke them. And there is enough truth in the new theories that they can do so in good conscience. But education reformers mustn't forget that the gains their movement made in this decade were not the product of local schools but of faraway state capitals. Democracy requires that governments, both distant and local, never forfeit the right to "interfere" in our public schools.

—Timothy Noah

Donnie Brasco: My Undercover Life in the Mafia. Joseph D. Pistone, Richard Woodley. *New American Library, $18.95.* For the American Mafia, these are hard times. Until recently, insight into the Mafia was limited to the scraps that investigators, journalists, and scholars occasionally excavated. Now, mainly through electronic eavesdropping by the FBI and the memoirs of Mafioso turncoats, relatives, and girlfriends, a number of illuminating portraits have emerged. The latest comes not from a Mafia traitor but from an infiltrator, FBI agent Joseph D. Pistone. Through incredible guile and unquestionable courage, Pistone manipulated his way deeper into the outer ring of several Mafia families than any previous law-enforcement agent.

Pistone's observations demystify the myths concocted by novelists and moviemakers about a benevolent, roguish side to the Mafia. As witnessed by Pistone, daily life for the rank-and-file mobster is as dreary as toiling on an assembly line. Most of their time is devoted to endless scheming for a share of someone else's illicit plunder and bickering over advancement.

During his half-century reign, J. Edgar Hoover delighted in infiltrating leftist groups but banned undercover work against the Mafia, allowing its corruptions to flourish. He apparently overrated the mob, viewing it as impregnable, and feared that undercover projects might backfire and tarnish the bureau's reputation for invincibility. In the mid-1970s, after Hoover's death, the FBI and the Justice Department finally launched offensives against the Mafia. The FBI and federal prosecutors discovered that through RICO—the Racketeer Influence and Corrupt Organizations Act—the mob could be wounded if not destroyed. The federal crackdown resulted in the first significant splintering of Omerta, the code of silence. A weaker generation of Mafiosi, faced with long sentences for racketeering or drug trafficking, proved vulnerable to providing information in exchange for a new life under the Witness Protection Program.

Unlike the Hoover era, when the FBI favored agents with predominantly middle-class, white-collar backgrounds, the bureau began recruiting some street-oriented types. Pistone, with a blue-collar upbringing in Paterson, New Jersey, was one of the limited new breed. He infiltrated the Mafia by masquerading as a jewel thief.

The original plan called for Pistone, using the fictitious name of Donnie Brasco, to work undercover for six months. Instead, he burrowed so deeply into a Bonnano crew in Brooklyn that the operation lasted five years. A key reason for Pistone's success was the crew captain's belief that Donnie Brasco was a potential big earner. It took a pittance of FBI cash and the opening of a bar in Florida, which the crew hoped to use for gambling and loansharking, to trap supposedly suspicious Mafia leaders.

Obviously an exotic bird in the FBI aviary, Pistone had the cultural background, sensitivity, and toughness to pose as a Mafioso candidate. Although not overtly critical of the FBI, Pistone hints that the bureau's periodic bungling and indecisiveness hampered him and may have even endangered his life.

Pistone was in his late thirties when

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the undercover operation began. The long separation from his wife and three teenage daughters generated unending difficulties and unhappiness, but the FBI made virtually no attempt to lighten his family's plight. After completing his testimony in cases connected to his undercover project, Pistone resigned. Inside the Mafia, Pistone was assured that a resourceful man with his brains, talent, and tenacity could go far. But Pistone, the ideal undercover agent, apparently saw no future for himself in the FBI bureaucracy.

—Selwyn Raab

Guatemala: Eternal Spring, Eternal Tyranny. Jean-Marie Simon. *Norton, $35.* With all the coverage of Central America, not much has been heard of Guatemala. Sure, Guatemala City made the news last August as the place where the five Central American presidents signed the Arias peace plan. But even though it has the largest population, the worst human rights record, and the most U.S. corporate investment of any Central American country, Guatemala never seems to attract much attention.

Simon, a photojournalist and stringer for *Time*, has written an odd primer—a cross between a coffee table book of vivid pictures and a recitation of body counts. Some of the 141 color photographs are lovely, such as the pictures of brightly patterned Indian textiles. Others are grim. One shows a soldier dancing with a girl in Nebaj, a town in the country's northern highlands where guerrilla activity and massacres of civilians have been heaviest. We see the girl's face and the soldier's back, complete with a shiny black machine gun. The girl's hand is poised gently on his shoulder as she dances, stiffly and unsmiling. There are also shots of the mutilated bodies.

Simon rightly points out that the violence continues. And she includes a short but interesting interview with President Venicio Cerezo that contains his candid admission that the military controls the country and only *lets* him be head of state. But the steady tone of outrage can grow wearying, especially since Simon never really allows for the progress of the past two years.

Like others who think the problems of Guatemala have been created by the United Fruit Company and the State Department alone, she does not seem interested in thinking seriously about the gradual changes that could benefit Guatamalans.

Still, the book is important. Presenting its grim, powerful message at a time when the initial success of the Arias peace plan has offered hope to those inclined to be hopeful, it has an effect on the reader analogous to that of Guatemala's most important human rights group, the Mutual Support Group, or GAM, as it is known. Organized by survivors of the disappeared, the GAM often drops in on events, bearing placards adorned with snapshots of men and boys abducted by the military. GAM protests tend to tarnish the fine veneer of democratic reform that is Cerezo's firmest asset.

I am reminded, for example, of the fall 1986 meeting of the Organization of American States at Guatemala City's National Theater. Soon after Cerezo concluded a proud, fiery opening speech, the National Police got into a scuffle with GAM members outside. GAM leader Nineth de Garcia led a knot of protesters toward the main gate, and the soldiers, caught off guard, panicked. Rushing in to block the way, one soldier swung down his wood baton and struck Garcia on the head. A moment later the metal gates were closed and the conflict settled into a noisy standoff, but the violent act hung in the air—like one of Simon's photos. The point was made: high-minded overtures notwithstanding, the wounds wrought by a grisly past still fester.

—Steve Kettmann

Presidential Wives: An Anecdotal History. Paul F. Boller Jr. *Oxford University Press, $19.95.* So Nancy Reagan consults an astrologer? So did Florence Harding, who was advised that her husband Warren "would never live to complete his term" as president. Moreover, Mary Todd Lincoln tried to reach her dead son Willie, via seance. Despite differences in the times, their ages, upbringing, and style, presidential wives have had much in common—so much, in fact, that historian Paul F. Boller Jr.'s book, a companion to his *Presidential Anec-*

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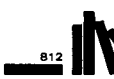

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dotes, somehow brings reassurance that the Republic will stand. And sometimes it seems to stand on the shoulders of the woman beside the president.

The anecdotes are telling: they portray presidential character, revealing behavior that ranges from extramarital dalliances to extraordinary devotion. And there's no doubt that personality influences policy.

Nearly all the wives acted as sounding boards and behind-the-scenes advisors. Helen Taft made her husband, the judge, turn down two appointments to the Supreme Court by Theodore Roosevelt because she thought he had a chance at the White House. Later, of course, he was named to the Court, which he'd wanted all along. Bess Truman blue-penciled Harry's speeches. Ellen, the first Mrs. Woodrow Wilson, proofread all her husband's writing. Sometimes at lunch they would speak in edit-talk: "The soup comma my dear comma is delicious semi colon Maggie is an excellent cook period No wonder exclamation you taught her period." But it was Edith, the second Mrs. Wilson, who became her husband's surrogate in his official capacity while he recovered from a stroke.

Frances Cleveland and Grace Coolidge were notable exceptions to the advisory role. They stuck to gracious entertaining for their men. As for hostessing, however, none came close to the vivacious Dolly Madison, who lifted her "little husband" into society, served as First Lady for the widowed Jefferson (yes, there was Talk), and led Washington in fashion and entertaining until she died at 81.

This book is full of poignant stories that bring us into the early lives of presidents later toughened by war, politics, and age. Jefferson's tormented grief at the death of his wife was monumental. William McKinley chose literally not to leave the side of his wife, Ida, who had developed epilepsy after the death of their baby daughter. The president broke protocol in order to sit beside his wife at state dinners, and adroitly whipped out his handkerchief or napkin to cover Mrs. McKinley's face when he saw a seizure coming on. And long-forgotten personal tragedies thread through the history—Rachel Jackson was hounded to her death before her husband's inauguration by her vilification as an "adulteress." Her first husband, it seems, had not obtained a divorce, contrary to what Andrew Jackson had been told when he married her. Mary Lincoln's grief over her son Willie was matched by that of Jane Pierce, who watched her 12-year-old only son killed by the Inaugural train as it passed through Massachusetts.

But the wives, on the whole, have been a brave, even heroic, bunch. Martha Washington and Mary Lincoln accompanied their men to the battlefields, and Louisa Adams entered a French prison to save Mme. Lafayette from the guillotine. Not elected to any office, most have hated the constant scrutiny and criticism. As if speaking for the lot, Caroline Harrison wailed, "What have we ever done, that we should be held up to ridicule by newspapers, and the president so cruelly attacked and even his little helpless grandchildren made fun of for the country to laugh at?"

Nevertheless, as Boller's book illustrates, the president's wife can exert more power on the president than many an elected official. They deserve to be more than footnotes to history.

—Mary Lynn Kotz

Old Money. Nelson Aldrich. *Knopf, $19.95.* There are enough insights and revealing anecdotes in this book to keep the reader going despite the meandering, often fuzzy tone. The book is essentially an attack on the Ernest Hemingway heresy—the idea that the rich are different only because they have more money. In fact, Aldrich says, America's old rich are different in being repositories of certain *values* that can't survive elsewhere because they're inconvenient for non-aristocratic people who are worried about getting ahead. Aldrich presents the Old Money values as being, on balance, quite admirable. They include loyalty, service, and modesty, with the downside being raw anti-Semitism and other ugly traits.

Aldrich is persuasive in at least the first part of this argument: showing that Old Money families think of

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themselves as different. They consciously center their lives on family ties (although he doesn't make the parallel, they sound about as family-conscious as Italian immigrants). They revere their club lives and, above all, their prep schools. They are supercilious toward, but secretly afraid of, ambitious striving people, especially the Jewish ones. Until the Vietnam war, they were more obsessed than most middle-class Americans with the romance of a combat record. They knew that wartime service could redeem people who otherwise would come across as pantywaists—think of George Bush.

What's less persuasive is Aldrich's wistful assumption that this old class has lost its allure. In a country of self-made men, Aldrich says, no one can really respect the courtly old ways. Maybe the patrician *values* have faded; loyalty, service, and modesty seem on the defensive at all levels of American life. But Old Money *status*, the appearance of being upper class, seems much more important now than it was a generation ago. American society is still more entrepreneurial than any other, but the allure of Old Money snobbery is so strong that people often try to conceal the fact that they've risen on their own. Eliot Richardson is an orphan, a little-known fact that makes his accomplishments all the more admirable; yet for some reason he presents himself as a 20th-generation prep-school man. From Peter Peterson on the respectable side to Ivan Boesky and Martin Siegel on the disreputable, people who've piled up money on Wall Street have used it to buy European art, English clothes, old Long Island houses, and other fixtures designed to make them seem born to privilege. The infamous *Newsweek* ads showing George Will sipping tea in his study are powerful proof that old-money snobbery is far from dead. H. Ross Perot is a self-made man who never pretended to be anything else, but many of America's recently rich act as if they're ashamed of having succeeded on their own.

This is a perverse form of vanity—*why* should Americans pretend that they had inherited their position rather than having earned it? It's also more destructive to American values than it would be in most other societies. The faith that people can change their lives is the trait that makes American society most different from all others. The idea that only Old Money is good tells people that they can't change—the only way to get the right accent, the right childhood friends, and the right prep-school background is to inherit them.

There is also a hey-wait-a-minute factor to this book. Aldrich says he has spent much of his life reflecting on the psychological effects of having been born to an Old-Money family. But for most families other than the Adamses of Massachusetts, the whole concept of an American aristocracy is peculiar. What heritage, in fact, was Aldrich born to? Less than 100 years ago, his great-grandfather was a Rhode Island politician who decided to sell out. He worked his way into the U.S. Senate and then did favors for several special interests. He left office a rich man. That, and that alone, is the basis of all the rumination about the burdens of upperclassness. Suppose Ed Meese leaves office with a lot of dough, or Vance Hartke, or Paul Laxalt. Is this going to leave us with future Meeses and Hartkes and Laxalts agonizing about the meaning of old wealth?

—*James Fallows*

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